BRITAIN'S BEST MILITARY HISTORY MAGAZINE

HISTORY of WAR

WAR TRAINS
Frontline railways through history

WILLIAM HITLER
The Fuhrer's nephew who joined the US Navy

80TH ANNIVERSARY - EIGHTH ARMY VICTORY

EL ALAMEIN

- Deception & camouflage that fooled the Axis
- LRDG: Monty's eyes & ears in the desert
- Operation Supercharge: Final breakthrough

FUTURE
ISSUE 113

EDINBURGH CASTLE
Inside Scotland's steadfast bastion that defied the Jacobites

RED COATS VS MOHAWKS
Blow-by-blow account of the battle for New York province

KING & COUNTRY

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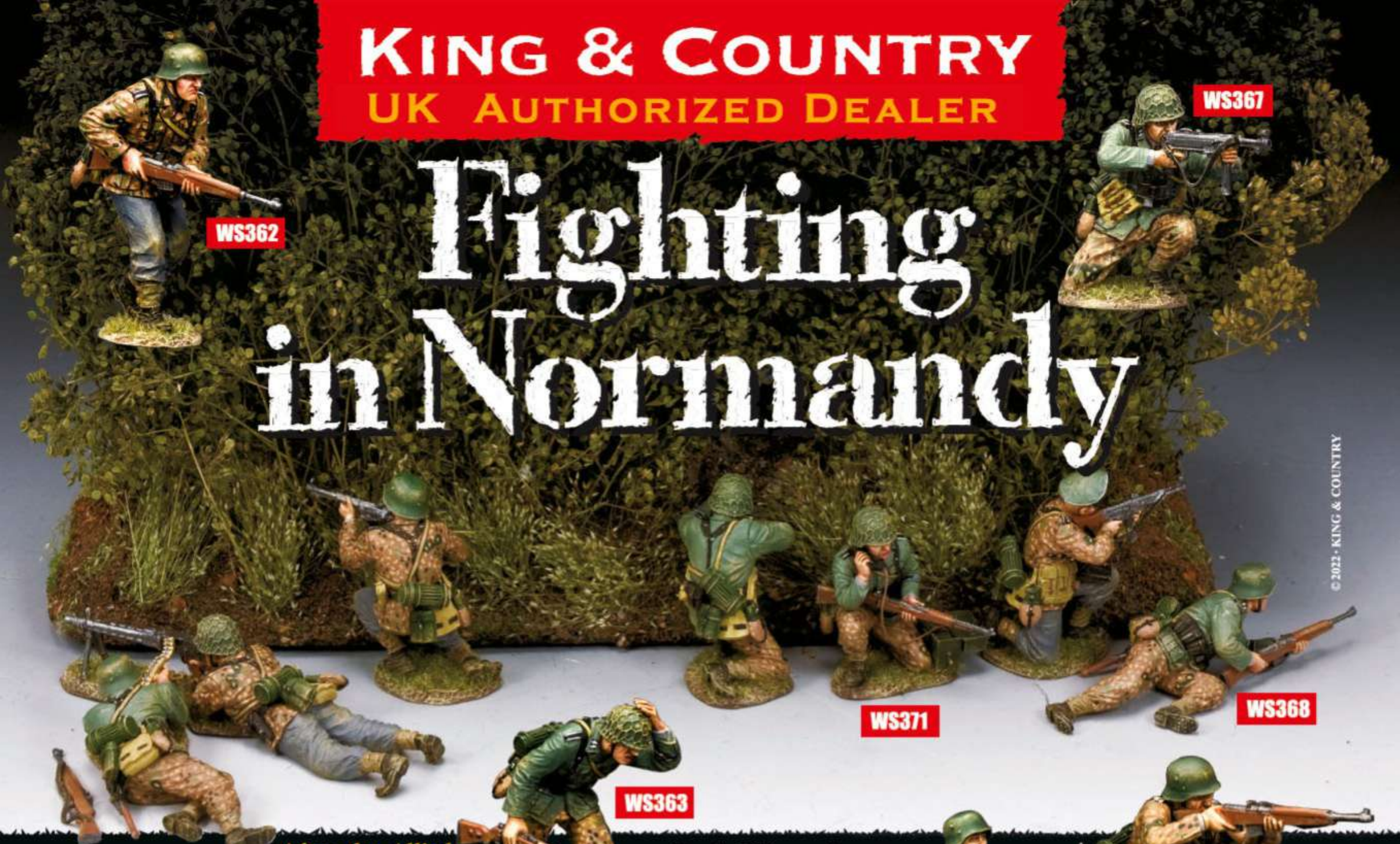
Fighting in Normandy



After the Allied landings in Normandy on June 6, 1944 among the German divisions launching a ferocious counter attack against British and Canadian forces was also one of the youngest and most notorious – *the 12th SS 'Hitlerjugend'*.

Recruited exclusively from 17 and 18 year old members of the ***Hitler Youth*** it was formed in mid 1943 and by September of that same year its 16,000 young recruits were being trained in Belgium.

To lead this new division its officers and NCO's were mainly drawn from the premier *1st Waffen SS* division, ***'Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler'***.

March 1944 saw the now fully-trained *12th SS* attached to the ***1st. Panzer Corps*** and relocated to Caen, Normandy. Normandy began the division rapidly gained a dubious reputation for both its fanaticism and brutality that shocked even many other German units.

BATTLE OF THE BOCAGE

These *12* all-new King & Country fighting figures illustrate some of these young fanatical soldiers in various *'action-poses'* defending their position against advancing British and Canadian troops.

All of the figures shown here are in *'mixed-rig'*, a combination of typical *Waffen SS* camouflage items with the more traditional field grey uniforms.

In addition they carry an assortment of late-war German weaponry.

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SCAN TO GET OUR WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

Above: Allied troops take the fight to German forces in the decisive North African campaign

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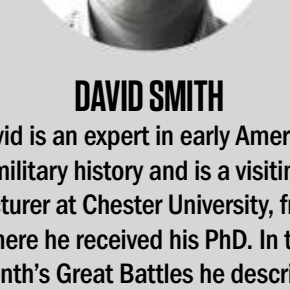


GAVIN MORTIMER

Gavin is a journalist and historian based in France, with a number of best-selling titles on special forces operations during the Second World War. On page 32 he recounts how the Long Range Desert Group helped gather essential intel for the Second Battle of El Alamein.

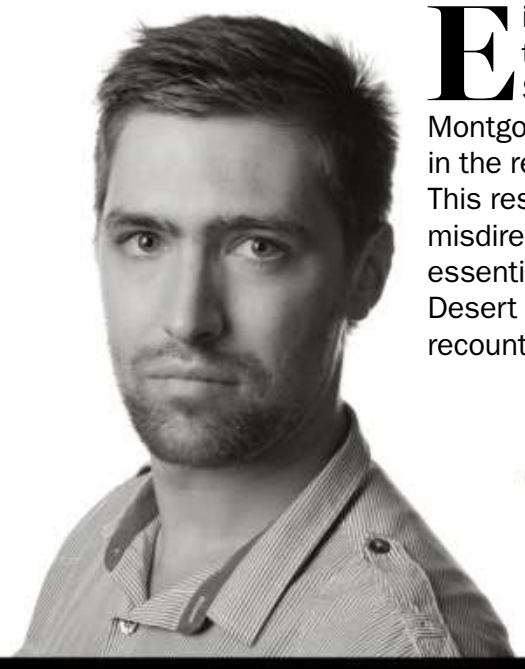
DAVID SMITH

David is an expert in early American military history and is a visiting lecturer at Chester University, from where he received his PhD. In this month's Great Battles he describes a pivotal battle in the early colonial conquests of North America (p38).

NICK SOLDINGER

Since the first tracks were laid over two centuries ago, railways have played a huge role in conflicts around the world. In this issue's Frontline Nick takes a look at how trains have been utilised in wars, from serving as logistics networks to enormous artillery pieces (p12).

Welcome



Eighty years ago this month, the tug of war in the Western Desert tipped decisively in favour of British and Commonwealth forces. The Second Battle of El Alamein was a resounding triumph for Bernard Montgomery and the Eighth Army. By the winter of 1942, the Axis forces in the region were firmly on the back foot, beginning their retreat west. This resounding result came after weeks and months of careful planning, misdirection and preliminary assaults by the Eighth Army, as well as the essential intelligence and reconnaissance provided by the Long Range Desert Group. This issue historians Gavin Mortimer and John Sadler each recount how these critical missions made victory in the desert possible.

Tim Williamson
Editor-in-Chief

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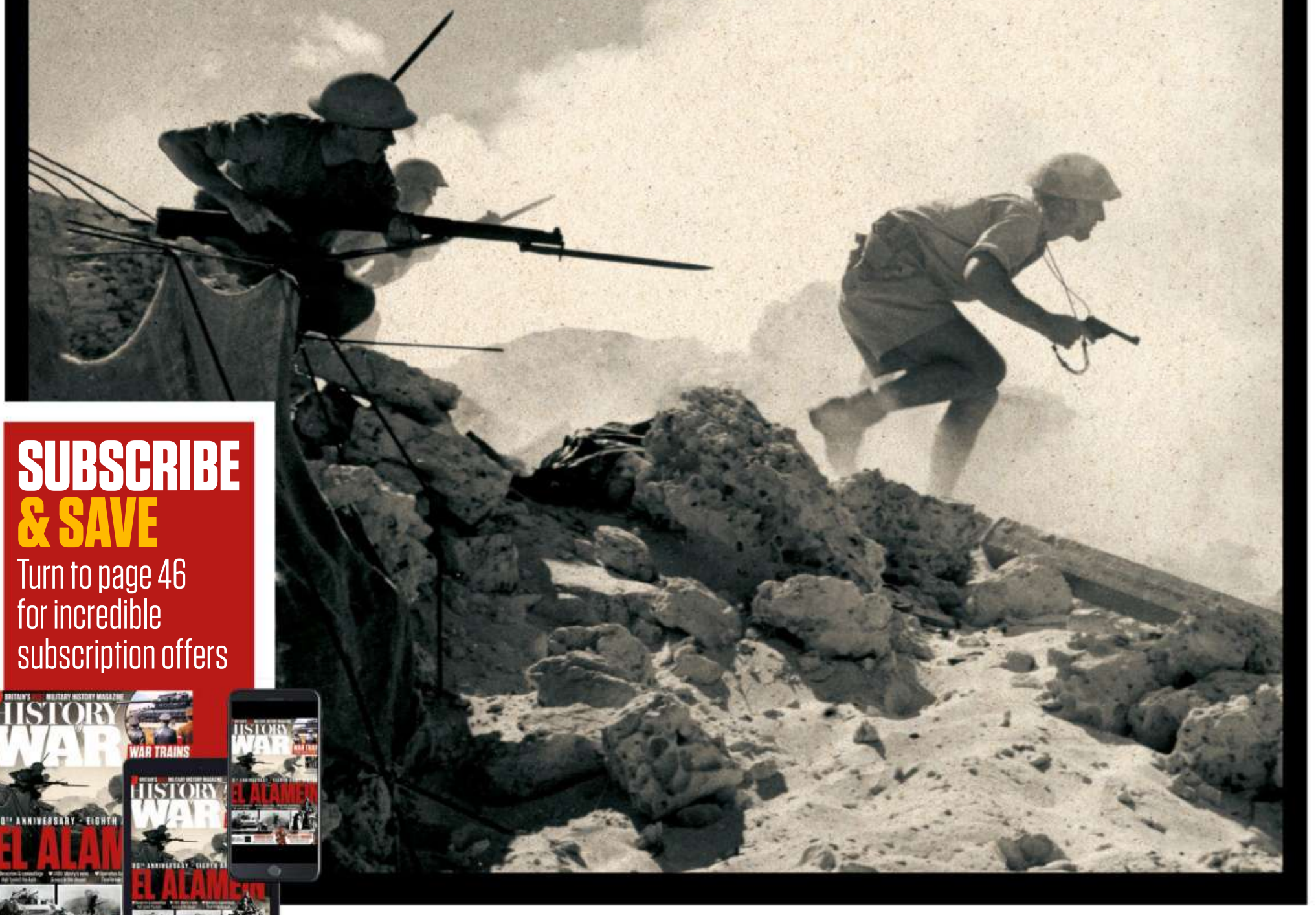

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Early rail networks were critical for transporting men, materiel, and even mounting artillery

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WAR in FOCUS

SOLDIERS AND CIVILIANS

21 January 1972

A woman eyes a British soldier on patrol in the republican New Lodge district of Belfast. A predominantly Catholic, working-class area north of the city centre, New Lodge saw much violence during 'The Troubles'. The month before this photograph was taken, 15 people were killed and 17 injured when the Ulster Volunteer Force bombed McGurk's Bar on North Queen Street. Constant battles between the British Army, Provisional IRA and Loyalist paramilitaries meant that parts of New Lodge were among the most dangerous places in Northern Ireland.

© Getty

WAR in FOCUS

CARRYING CHARLES XII

1878

Painted by Gustaf Cederström, *Bringing Home the Body of King Charles XII* depicts the repatriation of the Swedish monarch after he was killed in Norway. Charles XII (1682 – 1718) had been an ambitious king who initially won multiple victories for Sweden during the Great Northern War, but was severely defeated by Russia. His reign ended when he was shot in the head at the Siege of Fredriksten in 1718. Charles' death marked the end of the Swedish Empire.

© Alamy

WAR in FOCUS

LT. DAN BAND

24 November 2009

The Lt. Dan Band performs for American soldiers, sailors and Marines at Camp Leatherneck in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. A cover band formed in 2004 by actor Gary Sinise and musician Kimo Williams, the group entertains troops and raises money for disabled veterans. It is named after Lieutenant Dan Taylor, a disabled Vietnam War veteran that Sinise portrayed in the Oscar-winning film *Forrest Gump*. Over 18 years, the band has performed more than 500 shows across the world.

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TIMELINE OF...

MILITARY RAILWAYS

Rail transportation and artillery played an important part in military planning from the mid-19th century to the Cold War

PRUSSIAN DEVELOPMENTS

Powered rail transport is a relatively new concept and soon put to military use. Prussia transports soldiers and materiel by railway to Kraków in 1846. It then transports troops by rail during the First Schleswig War against Denmark.

An 1844 depiction of the Berlin-Zehlendorf Railway, which is located in the then-Prussian capital

AMERICAN CIVIL WAR 02

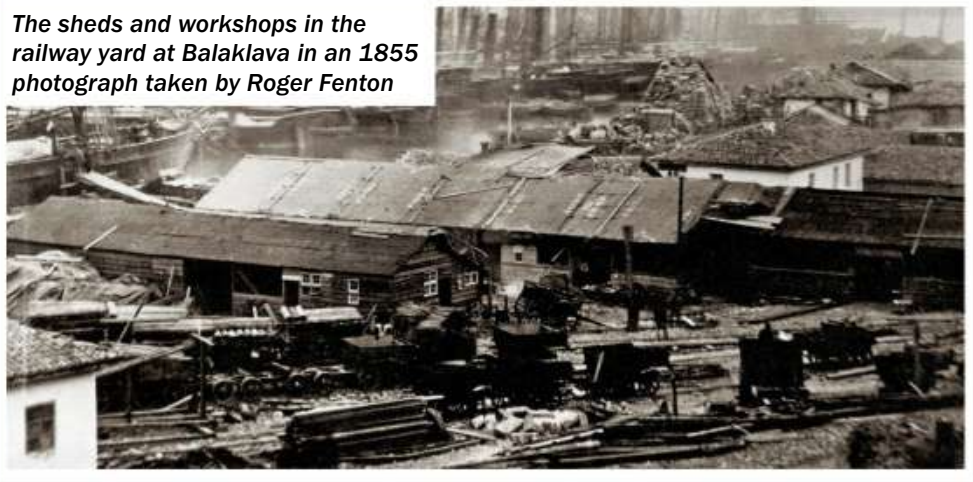
Railways play a major role in this conflict. They are used by both Union and Confederate forces as a major logistical tool and become military targets. Railways even have a direct effect on battles such as the First Battle of Bull Run.

1846-51 — 1855-56 — 1859 — 1861-65

GRAND CRIMEAN CENTRAL RAILWAY 01

The British build a military railway during the Crimean War to supply Allied forces at the Siege of Sevastopol. Headquartered at Balaklava, the line eventually runs for 23km (14 miles) and plays a crucial role in helping the Allies defeat the Russians at the siege.

The sheds and workshops in the railway yard at Balaklava in an 1855 photograph taken by Roger Fenton

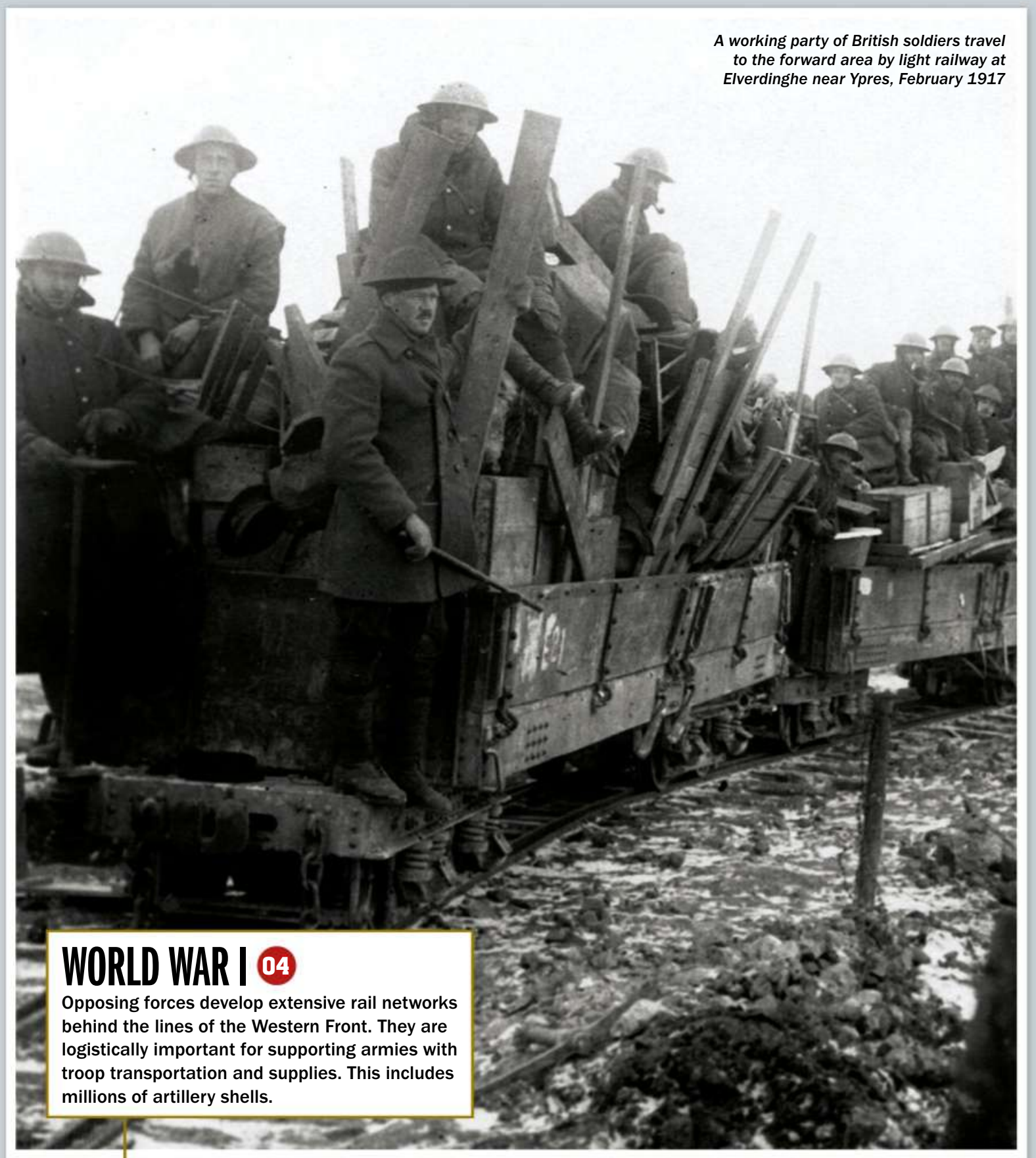


SECOND ITALIAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

The French Army transports tens of thousands of soldiers into Italy to fight the Austrians. The French use of trains prompts the Austrians to destroy the Valenza railway bridge in Piedmont. This is possibly the first military action against a rail network.

The Austrians blow up two arches in their attack on the Valenza railway bridge

A Confederate railway gun crew pictured at the Siege of Petersburg in 1864



A working party of British soldiers travel to the forward area by light railway at Elverdinghe near Ypres, February 1917

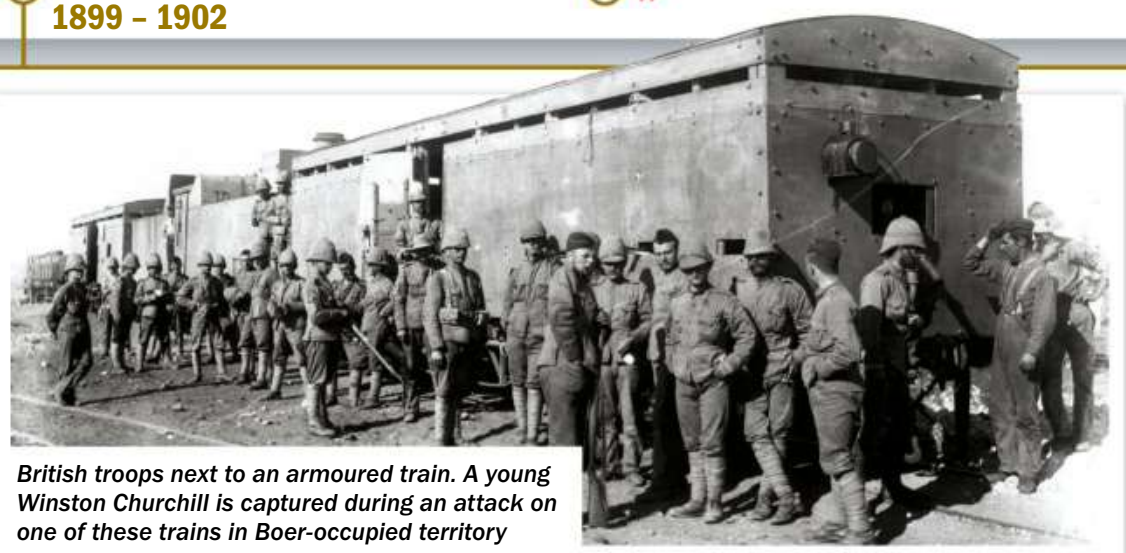
WORLD WAR I 04

Opposing forces develop extensive rail networks behind the lines of the Western Front. They are logistically important for supporting armies with troop transportation and supplies. This includes millions of artillery shells.

1899 – 1902

1914-18

1914-18



British troops next to an armoured train. A young Winston Churchill is captured during an attack on one of these trains in Boer-occupied territory

SECOND BOER WAR 03

The British use railways built for South African mineral wealth as logistical routes against the Boer republics. Boer commandos often attack trains, demolish bridges or sabotage rail lines, with the British responding with armoured trains.

HEJAZ RAILWAY 05

The Hejaz is a strategically important Ottoman-controlled railway that runs from Damascus to Medina. It is repeatedly attacked and damaged during World War I as part of the Arab Revolt, including by Arab guerrillas commanded by TE Lawrence. British aircraft also bomb the railway.

Ottoman trains destroyed by Allied forces along the Hejaz Railway still litter the desert landscape, such as this locomotive and rolling stock at Hadiyah, Saudi Arabia

Images © Alamy, Getty

TIMELINE OF THE...

MILITARY RAILWAYS

"BOLSHEVIK AND WHITE FORCES USE HUNDREDS OF ARMOURED TRAINS IN THE BLOODY CIVIL WAR THAT FOLLOWS THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION"

1914-45

RAILWAY GUNS

Although railway guns are developed before the 20th century they come into their own during the World Wars. All sides use them as heavy artillery, with the largest being the German 80-centimetre (31-inch) Schwerer Gustav gun during WWII.

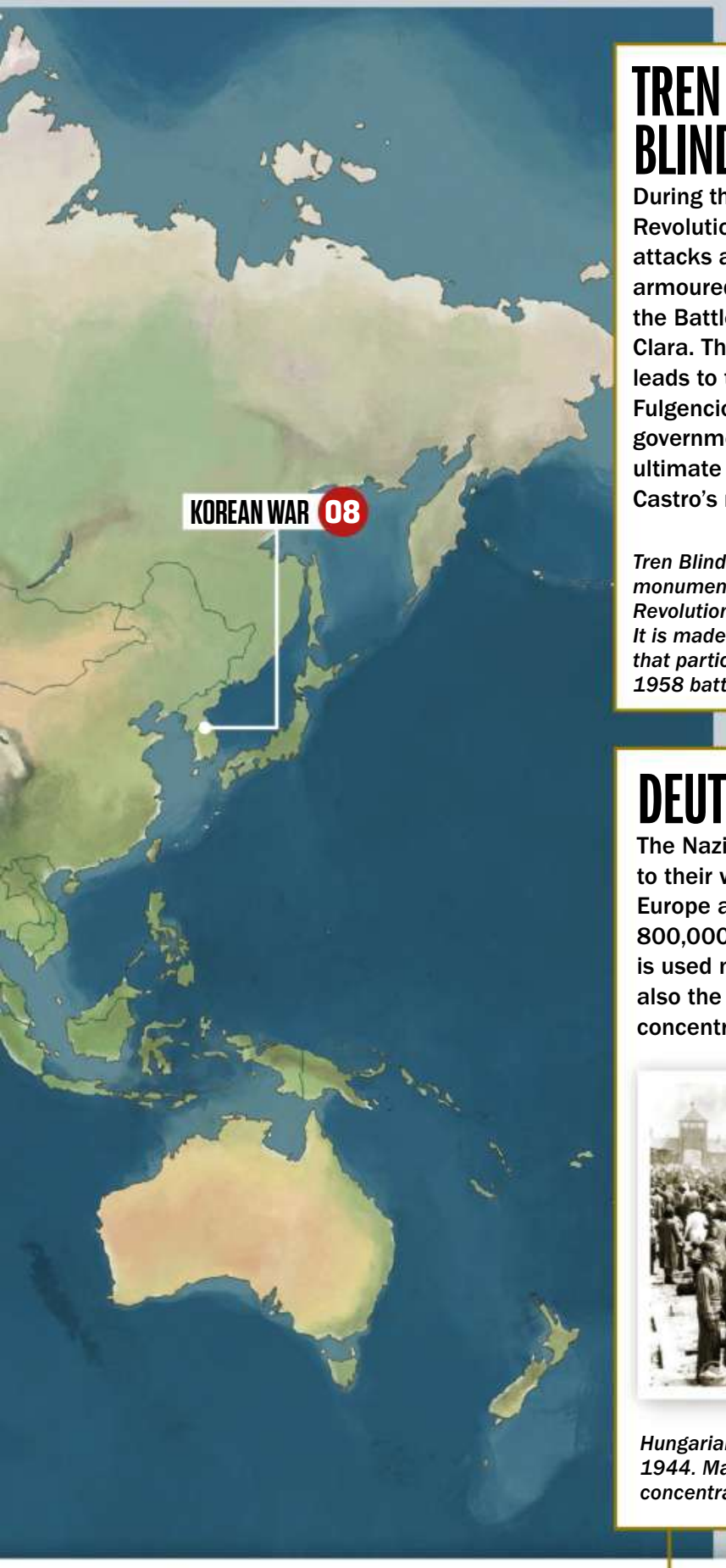
American artillerymen fire a 14-inch railway gun at Argonne in northeast France towards the end of WWI

1917-23

RUSSIAN CIVIL WAR

Bolshevik and White forces use hundreds of armoured trains in the bloody civil war that follows the Russian Revolution. They are heavily armed, can carry raiding parties, and act as mobile military bases with communications facilities.

An example of a Bolshevik armoured train with a revolving gun turret pictured near Tsaritsyn (Volgograd), Russia, in 1918



TREN BLINDADO 09

During the Cuban Revolution, Che Guevara attacks and derails an armoured train during the Battle of Santa Clara. This engagement leads to the fall of Fulgencio Batista's government and the ultimate victory of Fidel Castro's revolutionaries.

Tren Blindado is a national monument of the Cuban Revolution in Santa Clara. It is made from carriages that participated in the 1958 battle

DEUTSCHE REICHSBAHN 06

The Nazis' rail network is extremely important to their war effort. Following conquests in Europe and Russia it expands to operate 800,000km (500,000 miles) of track. This is used not just for military purposes but also the deportation of millions of people to concentration camps during the Holocaust.

Hungarian Jews arrive by train at Auschwitz, June 1944. Many Holocaust victims are transported to concentration camps in unsanitary cattle trucks

KOREAN WAR 08

Railways are vital for transporting supplies from Manchuria to North Korean and Chinese forces. American aircraft bomb these lines but the attacks prove largely ineffective. United Nations armies are efficiently reinforced by rail from Inchon.

The US Air Force drops napalm on carriages south of Wonsan, North Korea, c.1950-51

1939-45 — 1939-45 — 1942-43 — 1950-53 — 29 December 1958

WORLD WAR II

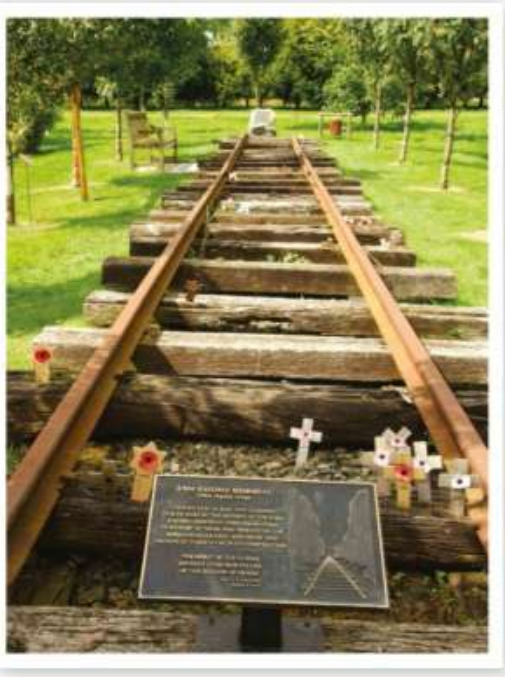
Railways are used for major operational movements on most fronts during the war. They transport soldiers and large supplies such as tanks but, despite their importance, trains and lines are highly vulnerable to air attack.

The London Necropolis Railway Station is heavily damaged during an air raid in 1941. Located near Waterloo Station, it is permanently closed after 1945 due damage sustained during the conflict

BURMA RAILWAY 07

The Japanese Army forces 60,000 Allied prisoners of war and c.200,000 civilians to build a 415km (258-mile) military railway linking Burma and Thailand. Known as the 'Death Railway', the line becomes infamous for its horrendous working conditions.

A section of the Burma Railway built by prisoners is now preserved at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, England



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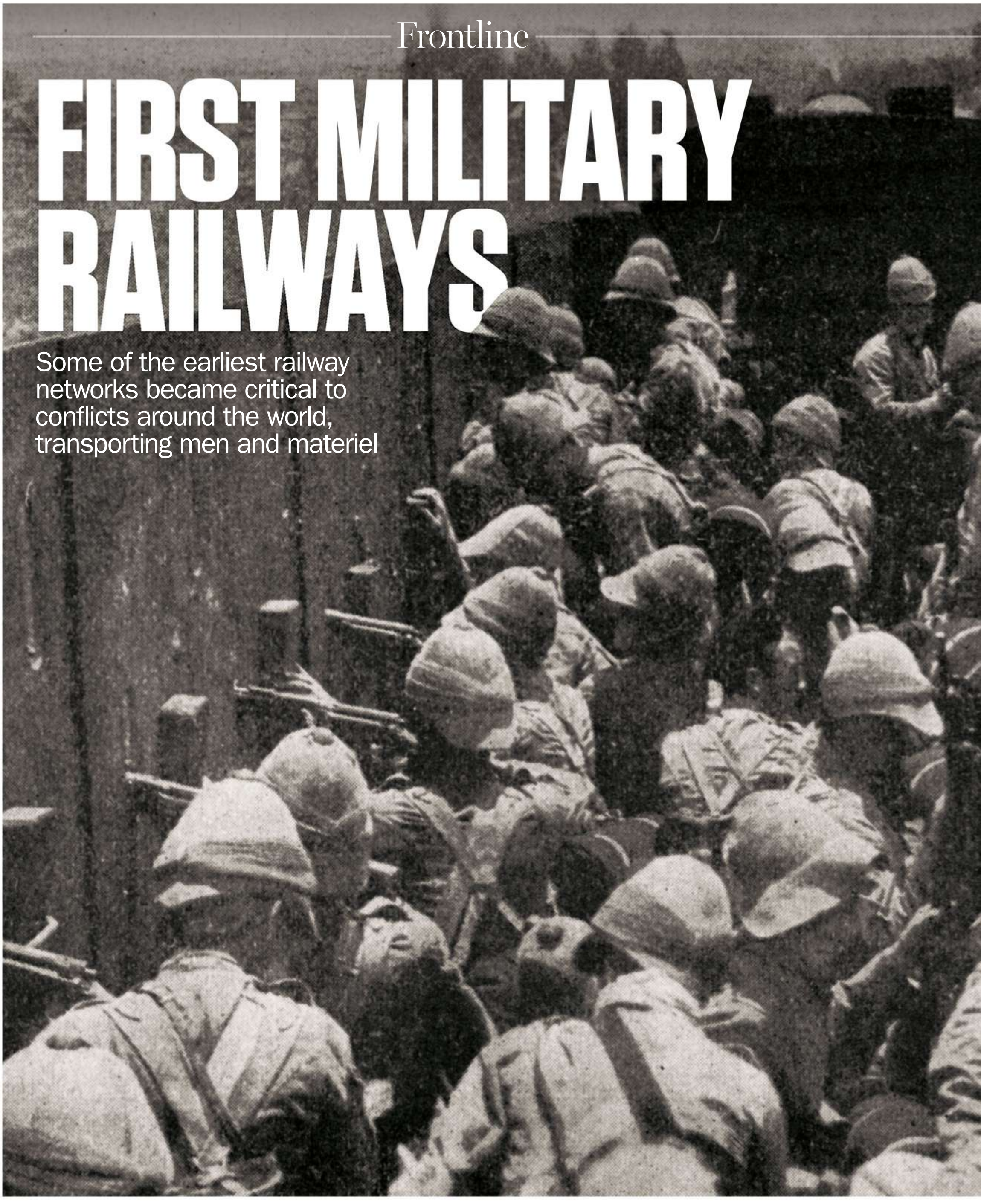
FIRST MILITARY RAILWAYS

Some of the earliest railway networks became critical to conflicts around the world, transporting men and materiel



British troops fire from an armoured train in the Second Boer War, 1902

Throughout the 19th century, the steam engine drove the Industrial Revolution and the railways it brought transformed societies, fortunes and even landscapes. Its influence was powerful and far-reaching and it didn't take military thinkers long to start dreaming up ways to repurpose this mighty commercial tool to fight wars.

Initially, trains were recognised as an efficient means of transporting large amounts of men and materiel to battlefields. The Prussian, Russian and Austrian armies were the first to do this in the 1840s. The British, too, were early adopters and during the Crimean War (1853-56) built the first-ever military railway when they constructed a 13km track from the port of Balaklava to resupply troops besieging the city of Sevastopol.

It wasn't until the American Civil War (1861-65), however, that the full military potential of railways and steam engines began to be realised. It was the first conflict to see rail lines and railway junctions become strategic objectives, and also the first in which trains were weaponised.

The Union army was the first to make use of armoured trains. Deploying them in a defensive role, they patrolled rail lines north of Baltimore to protect them from Southern saboteurs. The Confederates, meanwhile, were the first to use them in an offensive role. In June 1862, at the Battle of Savage's Station, Union troops found themselves up against a force that included a 32-pounder Brooke naval rifle, encased in an iron-clad carriage, being shunted into action ahead of a steam engine. Its use inspired the Union to develop its own version: a six-inch cannon mounted on a revolving platform, within a 32-foot armoured carriage, built by the Baldwin Locomotive Works in Pittsburg. Despite initial scepticism from some at the War Department's new US Military Railroads agency, several were in use by the end of the war. One even proved critical in helping to end the Siege of Petersburg and capture the strategically vital rail hub there.

"THE PRESENCE OF AN ARMOURED TRAIN HAD A GREAT MORALE EFFECT"

The first major deployment of armoured trains, however, wouldn't occur until the Second Boer War (1899 – 1902) when Britain deployed a total of 20. Primitive at first, these became increasingly sophisticated, not least because of a humiliating incident early on in the conflict.

In November 1899, Boer guerrillas ambushed a British armoured train in Estcourt in KwaZulu-Natal. By the time the fighting was over, four British soldiers were dead, 14 were wounded and a further 58 had been taken prisoner, including a young Winston Churchill. In his book *The Boer War*, Churchill described the train as "a very puny specimen, having neither gun nor Maxims [machine guns], with no roof to its trucks and no shutters to its loopholes".

The train Churchill was on consisted of a locomotive sandwiched between two sets of four wagons, three of which were armoured. Its main weapon, meanwhile, was a seven-pound artillery gun ("an antiquated toy", according to Churchill), that was so old-fashioned it was muzzle-loading rather than breech-loading.

As the war progressed, British trains became better armed and better protected. By its end, one would typically consist of a locomotive amid a string of railcars, where it was deemed less vulnerable. Behind it would pull a heavily armoured carriage containing a 12-pound gun, while two further armoured carriages at the front and rear carried soldiers armed with rifles and machine guns. Other wagons would carry equipment for repairing sabotaged lines, while a wagon at the front had a cow catcher fitted to it, to clear obstacles from the track and detonate mines.

A report published at the end of the war documented the successful role armoured trains had played in the conflict. In it, one officer recalled: "There is no doubt that the enemy disliked them intensely and that the presence of an armoured train had a great morale effect." The report also listed seven uses for armoured trains in future conflicts. These included infantry support, intercepting enemy troops, flanking protection, reinforcing railway stations and camps, patrolling, reconnaissance and railway protection.

The Second Boer War, however, would be the last time the British army fielded armoured trains in any significant way. Not that it was the end of the line for them – on the contrary, their real heyday would arrive with World War I.

A British six-inch naval gun mounted on a railway truck prepares to deploy to the Modder River Station during the Second Boer War, c.1900

Images © Getty

WWI ON RAILS

The outbreak of the Great War saw the rapid development of armoured trains – formidable weapons that played a pivotal role in the conflict

The war the British Army found itself fighting on the Western Front in 1914 bore little resemblance to the conflict it had won in South Africa just 15 years earlier. Although mobile at first, it soon became bogged down in a quagmire of trenches and barbed wire. In such a static conflict, there was no significant role for armoured trains to play. However, by late 1914 the need for mobile heavy artillery that could strike deep behind enemy lines was apparent, and railway guns were soon being considered.

The idea of mounting artillery on trains had been tried before. In 1882, during the Anglo-Egyptian war, the British had mounted naval guns on rail trucks to serve as heavy artillery support and had done the same thing with coastal-defence guns during the Second Boer War.

In Europe, meanwhile, the French became the first nation to purposely design and build a railway gun. By 1900, its army had 48 five- and six-inch guns mounted on narrow gauge wagons called Peigné-Canet carriages in service as fortress artillery at Verdun, Toul, Epinal and Belfort.

By the outbreak of war, however, no army possessed a heavy weapon on wheels that could reach deep behind enemy lines. This meant the earliest examples of this new breed of gun had to be improvised. The French were first again when, in the autumn of 1914, they mounted an obsolete coastal defence gun onto existing commercial rolling stock. The British, Germans and Americans followed suit and, by the time the war ended, railway guns were in operation all along the Western Front. They appeared on other fronts, too, with both the Italians and Russians developing them, with a total of 600 eventually involved in the conflict.

As the war raged on, railway guns became increasingly sophisticated, developing into bespoke weapons systems complete with specialised rolling stock for ammunition, personnel and technical stores. They grew in size and power too, with the biggest ever built being British. Nicknamed Scene Shifter and Boche Buster, the BL 14-inch railway guns boasted 52-metre barrels and could hit a target over 32km away with a shell weighing almost 1,500lb.

The role of armoured trains on the Western Front was largely limited to the Germans' use of them to patrol occupied territory behind their own lines. On the Eastern Front, though, where a more fluid conflict was being fought in a vast, open landscape, it was a different story.

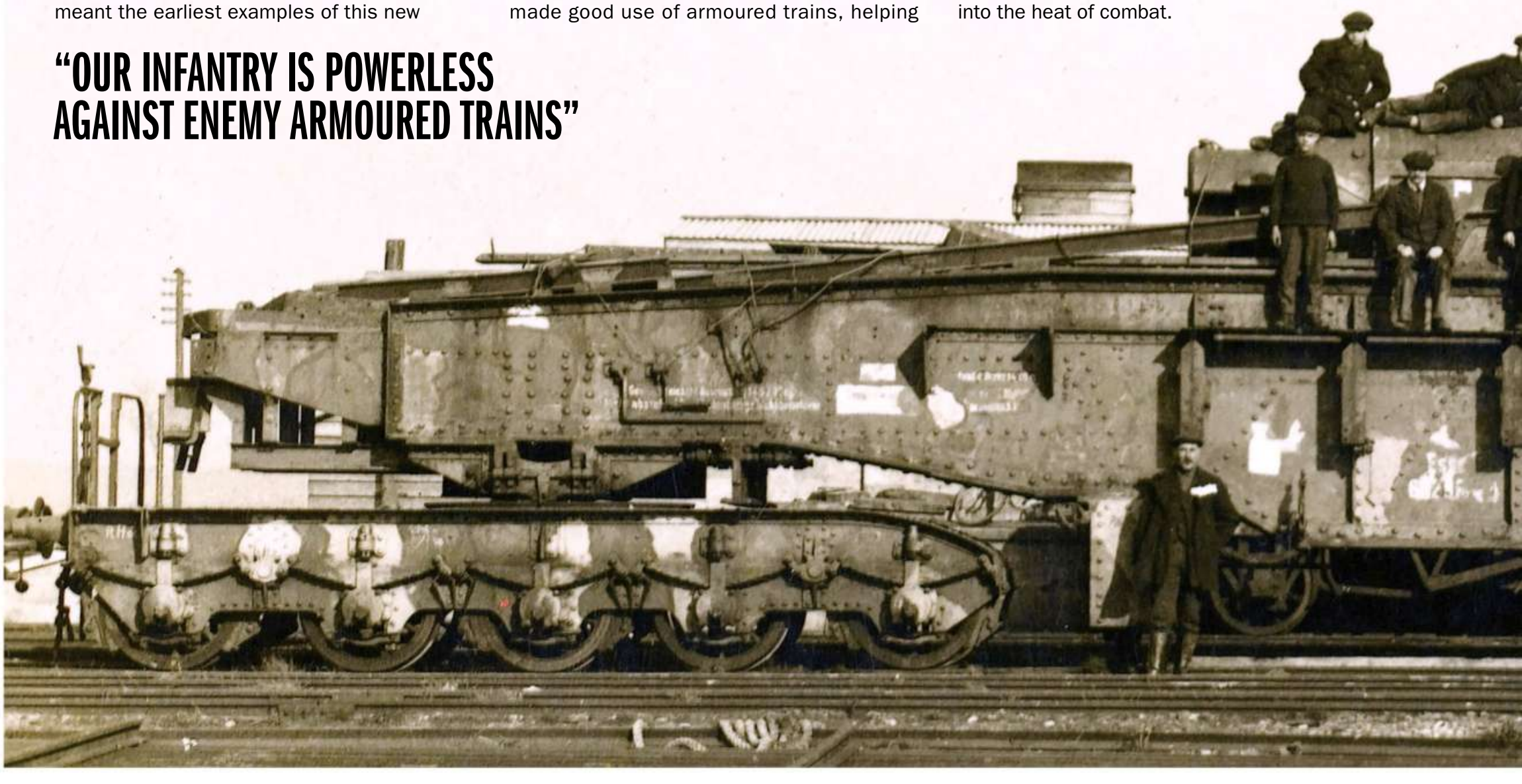
From the start, the Russians in particular made good use of armoured trains, helping the Tzar's troops to secure victory against the Austro-Hungarians at the Battle of Galicia in 1914. Their successful use so impressed the Austro-Hungarians that they went on to produce their own fleet of rail-based fighting machines and, by 1916, had ten deployed on their fronts in Russia, Romania and Italy.

Although the German armies in the east also deployed some armoured trains, it was the Russians who really specialised in their development and use. Early on in the fighting, Russian armoured trains were rudimentary, generally consisting of a locomotive pushing and pulling armoured box cars with firing slits in the side. By 1915, though, they had begun to more closely resemble battleships.

These so-called land cruisers were cloaked in thick armour plating and bristled with turreted artillery weapons and machine guns. The Khunkhuz class, for example, had a locomotive at the heart of various carriages and wagons, was protected by 10cm armour plate, and was armed with a three-inch mountain gun and 12 heavy machine guns.

The Tzar's army had a total of 15 armoured trains in service, from Finland down to the Caucasus. They were used primarily for surprise attacks and for transporting troops into the heat of combat.

"OUR INFANTRY IS POWERLESS AGAINST ENEMY ARMOURED TRAINS"



***Above, left:** Troops in France are dwarfed by an enormous American train-mounted gun, c.1918*

***Above, middle:** French soldiers on the Western Front camouflage a railway artillery unit, 1917*

***Above, right:** View of the exterior armour plating of an Austrian armoured train in Galicia, Eastern Europe*

When the Eastern Front collapsed in 1917 and the Bolshevik Revolution gave way to the chaos of civil war, the armoured train went from being an important weapon to a vital one. And it would go on to play a key role in deciding the country's future.

The Russian Civil War was brutal, long and bloody. Dragging on until 1923, it eventually cost around 13 million lives, and was fought and won largely along the railway lines that link the country's major cities. At first, the Tzar's fleet of trains was seized by various irregular militias. Before long, however, both the Red Army and the counter-revolutionary forces of the White Army were producing their own. A wide variety of models appeared, but the favoured system tended to see a locomotive wedged between two armoured wagons and a variety of other wagons, armed with one or two artillery pieces and a dozen machine guns.

At the height of the conflict, the Red Army had as many as 300 armoured trains in service, while the Whites had around 80. It wasn't unknown for these steel behemoths to slug it out if they met on some remote bit of track, but the Red Army's preferred role for them was as a weapon of shock and awe. Using them to transport raiding teams made up of 165 infantrymen, 47 cavalrymen and a machine gun detachment, they were driven into enemy territory, where they'd wreak havoc. The troops they carried served not only to protect it but to extended its range. Once a train had punched its way through the front-line defences, these troops could then be unleashed to assault enemy positions.

The sight and sound of these beasts approaching on a battlefield – engine snorting, whistle shrieking, guns blazing – could have a demoralising impact on the enemy. As one Polish soldier who faced them during the Polish-Soviet war of 1920 recalled: "In the recent battles armoured trains were the most serious and terrible adversaries. They are well-designed, act shockingly and, decisively, have large amounts of firepower. [They] are the most serious means of our enemies' tactics. Our infantry is powerless against enemy armoured trains."

Perhaps the most famous train of the period was the Zaamurets. Built in 1916, it boasted two turreted three-inch guns and eight machine guns. It was protected by 10cm of armour and powered by two Fiat petrol motors that gave it a top speed of 45km/h. Having served on the Eastern Front, it was sent in May 1918 to take on the Czechoslovak Legion in southern Russia. This force of approximately 40,000 men, who had become stranded in the country at the end of the war, were now trying to fight their way home any way they could. In the fighting that followed, they captured Zaamurets and used it to fight their way east along the Trans-Siberian Railway. By September 1920, they'd reached Vladivostok on Russia's far eastern edge and, after handing the train over to the White Army, set sail for Europe. When the White Army was driven out of the region in 1922 into neighbouring Manchuria, they took Zaamurets with them. The train then took part in a conflict between local warlords before being requisitioned by the Chinese Army. It was used in its struggle against Japanese-backed forces, who captured it in 1931. While the Zaamurets' place in history is secure, what became of it after that remains a mystery.

This German railway gun was captured by the Allies at the Battle of Amiens in August 1918

Images © Alamy, Getty

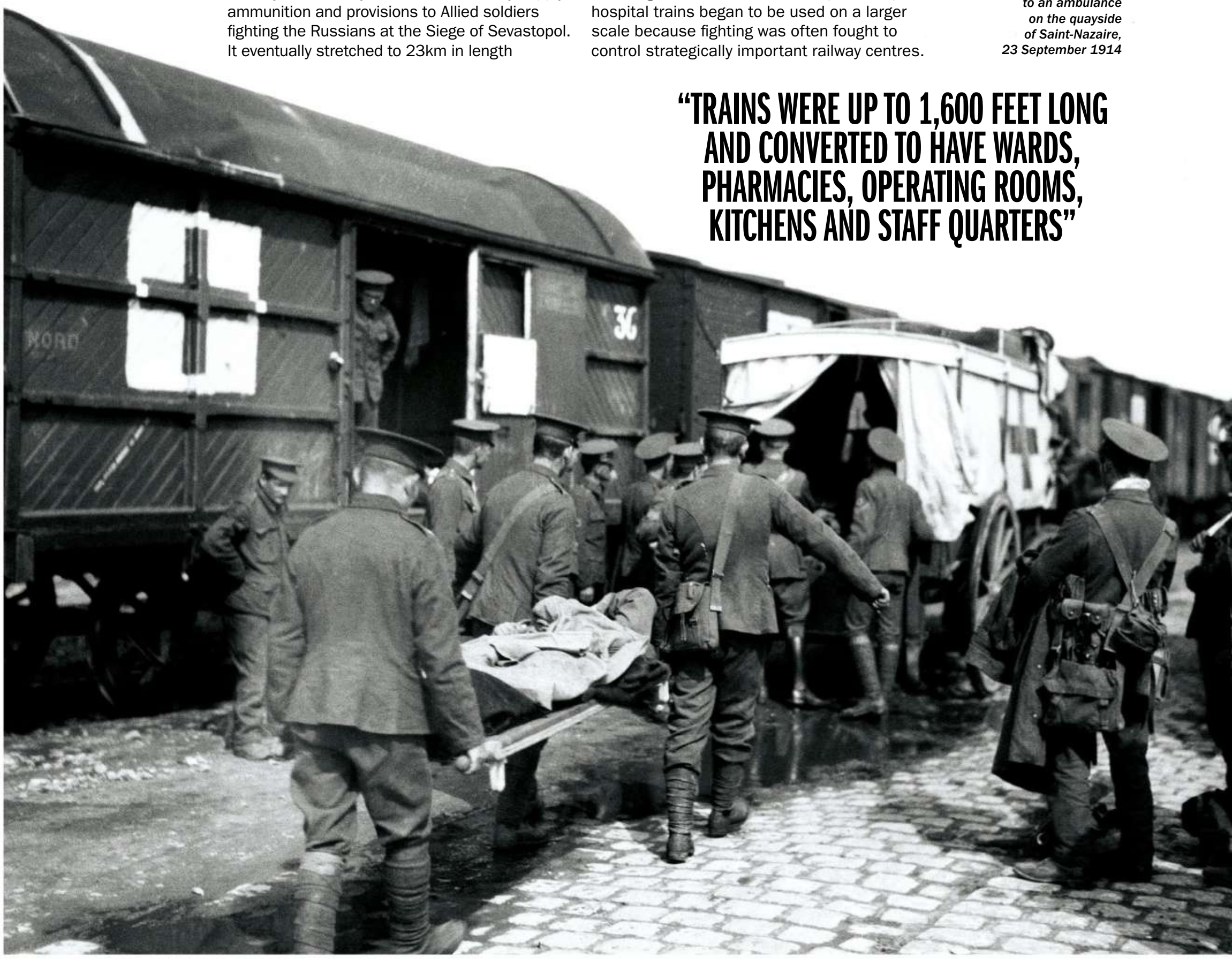
HOSPITAL TRAINS

These long military medical trains were first developed in the 1850s and reached the zenith of their effectiveness during World War I

While hospital trains can also have civilian purposes, since their advent they have mostly been used by armed forces around the world, to treat wounded and ill military personnel. Their use stretches back almost as far as the introduction of military railways and were first used during the Crimean War (1853-56).

Opened in 1855, the Grand Crimean Central Railway was built by the British to initially supply ammunition and provisions to Allied soldiers fighting the Russians at the Siege of Sevastopol. It eventually stretched to 23km in length between Sevastopol and the British military headquarters at Balaklava. A major factor in the Allied success during the siege, the railway was mostly horse-drawn, and from April 1855 the British soon realised they could use empty trains to take injured and sick soldiers away from the front lines. The rolling stock was unsuitable and unhygienic from carrying supplies but nevertheless the railway was effectively the first to use hospital trains.

During the American Civil War (1861-65), hospital trains began to be used on a larger scale because fighting was often fought to control strategically important railway centres.



***Below:** Wounded British soldiers are transferred from a hospital train to an ambulance on the quayside of Saint-Nazaire, 23 September 1914*

"TRAINS WERE UP TO 1,600 FEET LONG AND CONVERTED TO HAVE WARDS, PHARMACIES, OPERATING ROOMS, KITCHENS AND STAFF QUARTERS"

The crowded interior of a British hospital train, c.1914

As in the Crimea, casualties had to be removed to the rear of active operations, with the Union Army establishing Sanitary Commissions to ensure that carriages were clean. The carriages were hardly modified from civilian rolling stock, although some had rubber slings to support stretchers in an attempt to minimise the discomfort of the wounded soldiers.

After Crimea the British continued to use hospital trains for the rest of the 19th century for their colonial wars, including the Anglo-Zulu War and Second Boer War. But it would take a global conflict for them to come into their own.

World War I

Because of the mass casualties created by the industrial scale of WWI, many more wounded soldiers had to be transported away from the front lines. Trench warfare complicated an already difficult process, with casualty clearing stations and field hospitals being a common feature along all parts of the Western Front. As in previous conflicts, trains were the fastest way to treat the wounded but they were much more medically sophisticated.

The British once again led the way in utilising hospital trains during the war. Trains were up to 1,600 feet long and converted to have wards, pharmacies, operating rooms, kitchens and staff quarters. Each ambulance train could transport and care for approximately 500 wounded soldiers and be staffed by 50 medics, including medical officers, nurses and orderlies.

Because the Western Front was so close to the British mainland, casualties could be transferred from hospital ships at Southampton to dozens of receiving stations across England, Scotland and Wales. Such was the necessity for ambulance and supply trains that thousands of railway workers were refused entry into the armed forces. There were 20 ambulance trains operating in Britain and they were so successful that 31 more were built to operate in France to assist the beleaguered French railway network.

When soldiers were wounded at the front they were initially rescued by stretcher bearers, who took them behind the lines. They might then be transported on narrow-gauge ‘trench railways’ such as the British War Department Light Railways, the French Decauville light railways or the German Feldbahns (field railways). Only then would they be sent to field hospitals or ambulance trains.

Although they were designed to provide aid, ambulance trains could be uncomfortable journeys for casualties. Each man had a cramped bunk and those with broken bones would feel every movement of the train. The carriages were also unhygienic because the wounded soldiers came straight from filthy trenches or No Man’s Land. Medical staff would sometimes work 24-hour shifts and they were at risk of catching battlefield diseases or lice. When the war poet Robert Graves was severely wounded in 1916 he recalled his journey on the ambulance train as “a nightmare. My back was sagging and I could not raise my knees to relieve the cramp, the bunk above me only a few inches away.”

Nevertheless, hospital trains were a great asset for the Allied medical effort. They enabled thousands of soldiers to be evacuated on a vast scale, almost as a counterbalance for the huge losses suffered on the battlefield. For example the first day of the Battle of Somme, 1 July 1916, saw the greatest loss of life in one day for the British Army. By contrast, 7 July 1916 was the busiest day of ambulance train traffic during the war, with many of the casualties’ lives being saved.

Hospital trains served much the same purpose during WWII as they had during WWI and were used by all major combatants. For example, they transferred many casualties to UK military hospitals that were located away from Luftwaffe bombing raids. Today, mobile motor transport and aerial evacuation has largely replaced the hospital train on the battlefield but some countries still use them for civilian purposes. This includes Russia, India, China and South Africa.

Images © Alamy

WWII SUPER GUNS

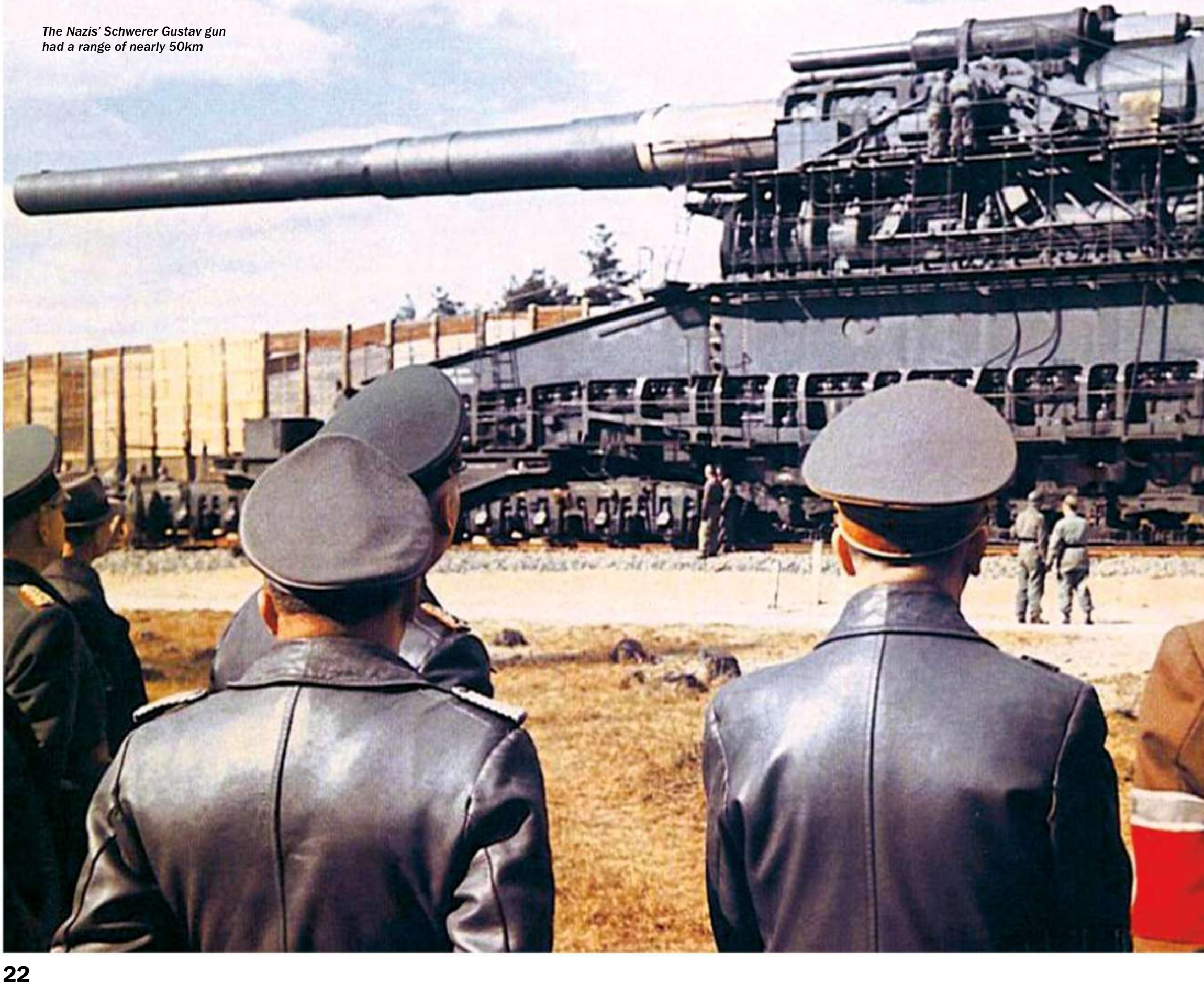
In the second great global conflict, railways were mounted with some of the biggest artillery pieces the world had seen

As early as 1934, Nazi Germany began developing an arsenal of weapons to tackle the Maginot Line, the vast fortified network then being built by France along its eastern border. Among these weapons were several giant railway guns with enough power to smash their way through the Maginot's thick concrete walls.

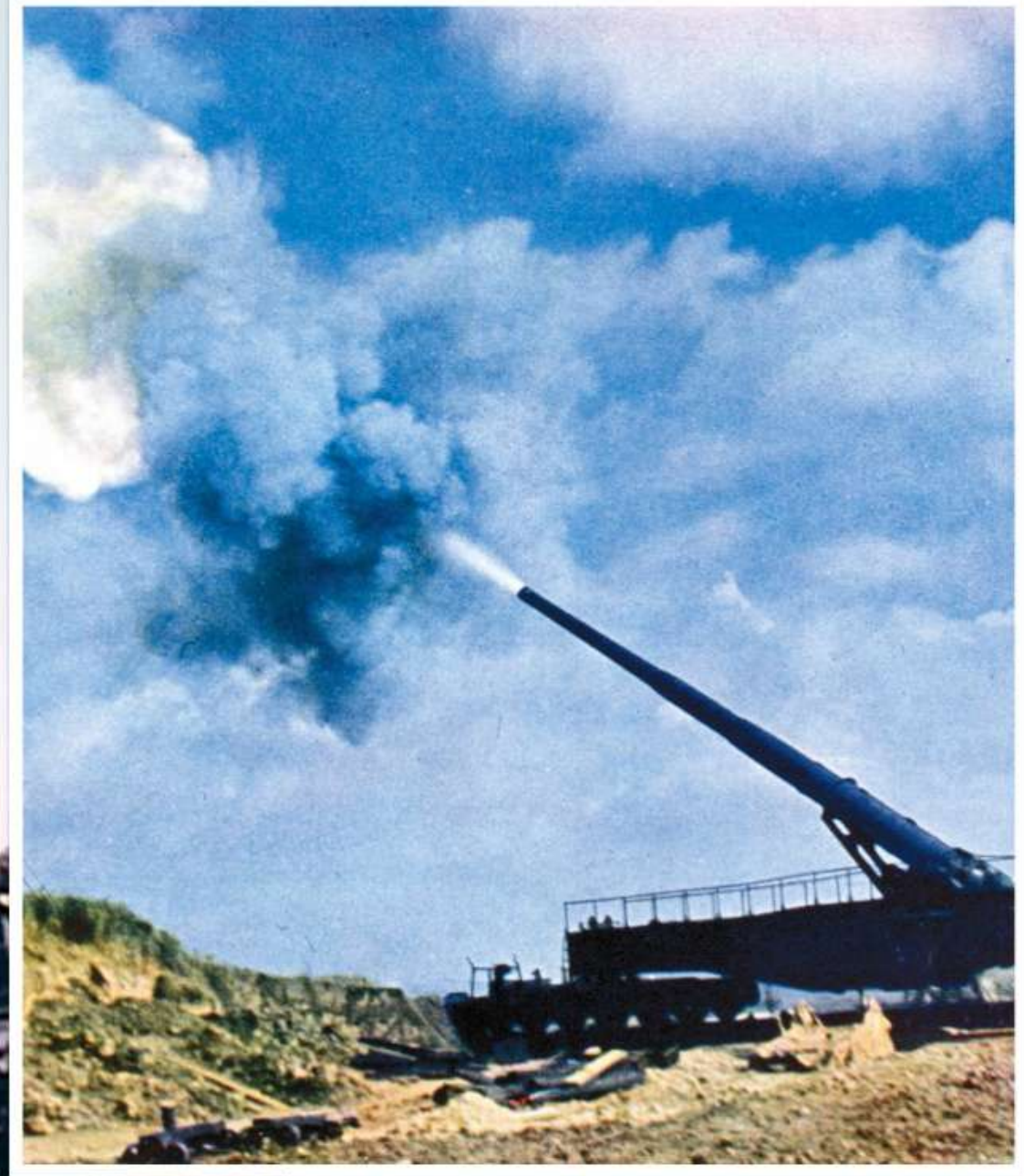
Not that the guns were ever used for this purpose. When the Wehrmacht invaded France in 1940, it did so via the dense Ardennes Forest, bypassing the defences altogether. But the Nazis would find other uses for their monstrous new weapons.

The largest guns at their disposal were a pair of 31-inch titans called Schwerer Gustav and Dora. Designed by the German arms manufacturer Krupp, these artillery pieces were the largest ever built.

The Schwerer (literally heavier) Gustav, for example, weighed 1,350 tonnes, was over 47 metres long and had a 33-metre barrel. Because of its gargantuan proportions, its elevation range was only 48 degrees and, as was the case with earlier heavy railway guns, its horizontal targeting required the use of



The Nazis' Schwerer Gustav gun had a range of nearly 50km



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***Above, left:** A German Krupp K5 railway gun on the northern French coast fires across the English Channel at Dover*

***Above, right:** Another K5, positioned near Calais, opens fire, 1942*

“THEIR PRESENCE PROVED SO NOTORIOUS AND CAUSED SO MANY CASUALTIES THAT THE ALLIED TROOPS TRAPPED THERE NICKNAMED THEM ANZIO ANNIE AND THE ANZIO EXPRESS”

curved tracks to move it left or right. Each of its high-explosive shells weighed seven tonnes and could hit a target almost 50km away. But its sheer size also meant that it required its own set of tracks to move into range. These had to be specially assembled, demanding not only a vast workforce but an additional set of outer tracks for the cranes needed to build them. A crew of 250, meanwhile, was then required to set up the gun, a process that could take up to three-and-half days.

Because of this, the weapons saw little combat. Schwerer Gustav’s most notable contribution came during the Siege of Sevastopol in June 1942. After it had taken around 3,800 men to build the tracks required to move it into position, it fired around 300 shells over a four-week period, eventually helping to shatter Soviet resistance in the city.

Dora, meanwhile, was briefly deployed on the outskirts of Stalingrad in August 1942 but was withdrawn before the counterattacking Soviets could capture it. Both guns were destroyed by the Germans towards the end of the war before they could fall into enemy hands.

Germany’s most successful use of its railway super guns during the war was in Italy in 1944. The 11-inch Krupp K5 weighed in at 215 tonnes and could fire a 536lb shell almost 65km. Twenty-five were built in the lead-up to the war and, in February 1944, two were used to counter the Allied invasion at Anzio, 65km south of Rome.

Stationed in the Alban Hills above the beachhead, the K5s, known by the Germans as Leopold and Robert, rained fire down on the British, American and Canadian troops coming ashore there. Typically firing an eight-shell salvo before being shunted back into a tunnel to avoid detection from the air, they held up the Allied advance until the end of May. Their presence proved so notorious and caused so many casualties that the Allied troops trapped there nicknamed them Anzio Annie and the Anzio Express. It’d take a total of three months for the Allies to fight their way off the beaches. When they pushed inland, they discovered the two guns hidden in their railway tunnel and, despite the Germans’ best efforts, managed to capture them largely intact.

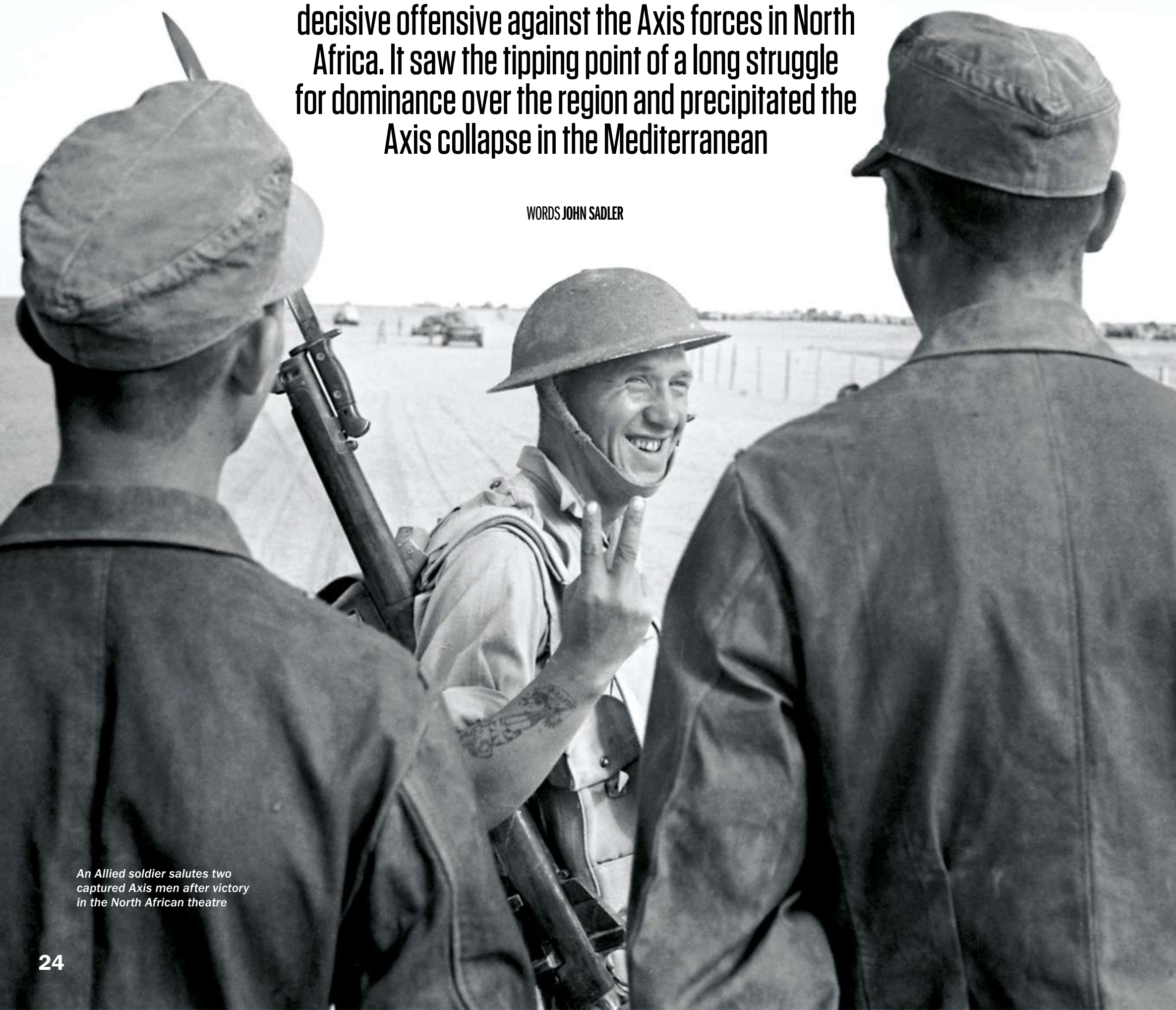
Despite these successes, technological advances had rendered military trains largely redundant by the close of the war. Although the Russians would develop rail-mounted nuclear weapons during the Cold War and even resurrect the use of armoured trains in 2022’s invasion of Ukraine, its days as a dominating, battle-winning weapon were long over.

AN END TO THE BEGINNING

THE SECOND BATTLE OF EL ALAMEIN (23 OCTOBER – 11 NOVEMBER 1942)

Eighty years ago, the Allied 8th Army launched a decisive offensive against the Axis forces in North Africa. It saw the tipping point of a long struggle for dominance over the region and precipitated the Axis collapse in the Mediterranean

WORDS **JOHN SADLER**



An Allied soldier salutes two captured Axis men after victory in the North African theatre

Hitler did not want to fight for North Africa in 1941, his eyes were staring eastwards towards steppe not desert. Egypt was the prize his ally Benito Mussolini coveted. Yet Il Duce's ill-judged invasion of Greece was compounded by failure in Libya when Generals Wavell and O'Connor's strike in December 1940, Operation Compass, heralded disaster for Italy. Erwin Rommel was sent in with meagre forces, and grudgingly, to stem the rot. But this tortoise turned into a hare. The Desert Fox – generally at odds with his hosts and nominal superiors, not to mention High Command, was a maverick genius who began to rapidly turn the tide. It kept turning. The pendulum of war in the Western Desert began to swing, and it swung back and forth through abortive British offensives, Brevity and Battleaxe, then more tellingly with Claude Auchinleck's Crusader offensive.

But Rommel wasn't daunted. He struck back, harrying the Allies eastwards, past Gazala and Mersa Matruh, into Egypt and the El Alamein Line. Auchinleck saw him off in the First Battle of El Alamein (1-27 July 1942) but failed to mount a successful counterstroke. By now Churchill, desperate for a convincing victory, had had enough of 'The Auk' and his mercurial Chief of Staff Eric Dorman-Smith. He appointed General Harold Alexander to overall command and gave 8th Army, firstly to William Gott, whose death in a plane crash then cleared the path for Bernard Montgomery.

Alexander's instructions were plain, as set out in a directive on 10 August:

1 ***Your prime and main duty will be to take or destroy at the earliest opportunity the German-Italian Army commanded by Field-Marshal Rommel together with all its supplies and establishments in Egypt and Libya.***

2 ***You will discharge or cause to be discharged such other duties as pertain to your Command without prejudice to the task described in paragraph 1 which must be considered paramount in His Majesty's interest.***

Monty was the new broom, as described in the *Official History (Volume 3)*: "General Montgomery… set to work at once to inspire confidence and enthusiasm in his Army. His address to the officers of Army headquarters made a tremendous impact, of which word soon spread. The defence of Egypt lay at El Alamein, he said, and if the 8th Army could not stay there alive it would stay there dead. There would be no more backward looks."

He first fought Rommel to a standstill at Alam Halfa (30 August – 5 September 1942) but made no immediate moves to riposte. Caution prevailed, and his offensive when it came would be based on significant superiority in men and materiel. Rommel was being starved of resources partly by Hitler (already Operation Barbarossa was in difficulties) and partly by Ultra as Enigma intelligence enabled the Royal Navy to target Italian supply convoys. New Allied tanks (M4 Shermans) and improved six-pounder A/T guns eroded previous Axis tactical weapons superiority.

"Montgomery was what I call a bit of a bullshitter, but I think that was part of his act, and very effective, I think," observed Sergeant J Longstaff of the 2nd Battalion Rifle Brigade. "He had to publicise himself and build up a reputation against Rommel, whose reputation was extremely high. We all thought the world of Rommel. If you were opposite Rommel, you expected something to happen. He did have a very demoralising effect on British troops. He was a bloody good general." Monty had much to prove.

Out of the chaos of earlier retreats, the forced abandonment and destruction of materiel, order was re-emerging. With communication lines short and a great quantity of supplies flooding into Suez, losses were being made good. From Alamein to the main depot at El Amiriya was a barely 100km and links between there and Suez were functioning. Wavell's realisation that Egypt could be grown as a vast workhorse had, by 1942, become a tangible reality. The Nile Delta was a thriving war-based economy. Food was grown and reared, combining with a sophisticated industrial expansion aimed at maximum war production. These vital functions, undertaken respectively by the Royal Army Service Corps (RASC) and Royal Army Ordnance Corps (RAOC), provided Monty with the sinews of war in the desert.

As the autumn drew on the moment of decision grew nearer. This battle would be akin to a Great War 'break-in' offensive with the Allies chewing their way through deep Axis defences and sucking their reserves into a cauldron where sheer numbers would decide. But mere might, however crushing, can always use a helping hand.

"THIS IS NOT THE END. IT IS NOT EVEN THE BEGINNING OF THE END. BUT IT IS, PERHAPS, THE END OF THE BEGINNING"

Winston Churchill

Bayonets fixed, Allied soldiers attack an Axis position during the decisive battle

Deception – Operation Bertram

As Montgomery described in his *Montgomery of Alamein* memoir, the object of the deception plan was twofold:

1. ***To conceal from the enemy as long as possible our intention to take the offensive.***
2. ***When this could no longer be concealed, to mislead him about both the date and the sector in which our main thrust was to be made.***

Deceit in war is as old as conflict itself: from the Trojan Horse to Operation Fortitude which sought to confuse the Axis as to Allied intentions during the build-up to D-Day in the spring of 1944. In the case of Operation Lightfoot, as the break-in phase of the planned battle was called, deception was a significant part of overall preparation. In the north, 30 Corps sector, where the main attack was planned, a great mass of dummy vehicles, tanks and guns had been fabricated to create an impression of density. Immediately prior to the attack, under cover of darkness, these were replaced by the real thing and dummies transported to the rear. In this way, the static fiction was maintained. At the same time, Lt-Col Charles Richardson, 8th Army wizard masterminding the whole show, had to conceal vast supply dumps being created. That they were satisfactorily kept hidden was a masterpiece of disguise brought into being by Lieutenant-Colonel Geoffrey Barkas, director of Camouflage at GHQ Middle East.

Dumps, such as that at Imayid, covered very large areas, in this case some eight square kilometres. Dummy vehicles were again employed to conceal the crates of ammunition within the timber and canvas frames, and fuel cans were hidden in existing yet ostensibly abandoned trench lines. The distinctive 25-pounders, with their equally recognisable quad tractors to be concealed in the forward areas, were artfully disguised by fixing a false section to the tractor to make it resemble an ordinary truck, and by bunching gun and limber then placing a fake screen over the top.

***Above, left:** Troops of the 8th Army manning an artillery piece come under fire from enemy shells*

***Above, right:** One veteran recalled how they advanced accompanied by the "sort of orchestral music of the continuous guns in the background"*

"We were engaged in 'creating' a concourse of tanks and lorries and even an HQ to confuse the enemy reconnaissance planes," recalled one soldier in *Alamein: Recollections of the Heroes*. "It was all done by hessian, some string and some very light wood, poles etc. The dummy camp and vehicle sites were erected at night with the help of moonlight and during daylight gave the appearance of busy military areas to very high-flying enemy planes. Vehicles travelled around and about creating clouds of dust and in early morning every encouragement to brewing up amongst the dummy bivouac was given, and of course, round the vehicles, or tanks, outlined in hessian, supported by thin wooden poles or 'cats' cradles of strong twine."

To provide an impression that the main effort was to be directed toward the southern sector, part of the deception involved the construction of 30km of dummy 'Diamond' water pipeline. "The pipe-trench was excavated in the normal way," explained Montgomery in *Montgomery of Alamein*. "Five miles [8km] of dummy railway track, made from petrol cans, were used for piping. The 'piping' was strung out along the open trench. When each five-mile section of the trench was filled in, the 'piping' was collected and laid out alongside the next section. Dummy pump houses were erected at three points;

***Below:** To deceive the Germans' observation planes, timber and canvas frames were used to disguise Allied artillery and tanks as trucks*

***Above, left:** Field Marshal Erwin Rommel (left) and General Ramcke pictured before the Second Battle of El Alamein*

***Above, right:** Operation Lightfoot saw Allied tanks pour through gaps in the Axis defences created by the infantry*

water points and overhead storage reservoirs were made at two of these points."

He deemed Bertram a success but this is hard to evaluate. Nonetheless, Axis intelligence remained convinced the main blow must fall in the south. One vital area, wherein 8th Army's performance improved exponentially, was that of signals and wireless communication. Ultra intercepts betrayed every Axis move and Rommel's ears had been clipped with the elimination of his elite interceptors. 'Ghost' radio traffic was added to the web of deception to mask troop movements.

"We were told that the last battle of the Alamein line – of Rommel's attack – would take place right in the sector that we were in front of – at Alam Halfa," said Longstaff. "We had something unique. We had magicians in charge of our camouflage. Large tins that had held potatoes were made to look as if they were anti-tank guns, vehicles were made with hessian to look like tanks – tanks were made to look like vehicles. Petrol supplies were made out of any old rubbish. Water points were made where there were no water points."

"WE HAD MAGICIANS IN CHARGE OF OUR CAMOUFLAGE. LARGE TINS... WERE MADE TO LOOK AS IF THEY WERE ANTI-TANK GUNS"

Operation Braganza

On the night of 29 September Lieutenant-General Brian Horrocks commanding 13 Corps to the south launched a preliminary mini-offensive. His objective was to seize ground by Deir el Munassib which would facilitate wider deployment of Allied guns prior to the main push. One infantry brigade, 131st (Queens), together with elements from 4th Armoured supported by nine field artillery regiments and one medium battery, made up the contingent. Battle commenced at 05.25 hours when 1/6 Battalion, Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey) struck the northern shoulder with 1/7 battalion hitting the east. Opposition was relatively weak but 1/5 Battalion ran into tough Italian paras from 185th 'Folgore' Division when they attacked south. Overall, gains were meagre.

Horrocks tried a second push to capitalise on these limited successes, especially in the north where 132nd (Kent) Brigade made further gains. Ironically, more casualties resulted from heatstroke rather than wounds. In the south the British still managed little headway and Horrocks called off the attack.

Operation Lightfoot

Lieutenant-General Oliver Leese with 30 Corps would be responsible for the main effort in the north, where infantry would punch two corridors through Axis defences along which General Herbert Lumsden could send 10 Corps armour. The intention was that Allied tanks would pour through the gaps and draw Rommel's panzers into a melee, where they could be irretrievably ground down.

Horrocks, in the southern sector with 13 Corps, would attack the enemy positions and operate with 7th Armoured Division to draw German armour in that direction. The aim

Illustrations: Nicholas Forder

A German 'Kettenkrad', a light half-track vehicle, pictured in North Africa, 1942

German prisoners from the Afrika Korps wait by a signpost to El Alamein, October 1942

***Below:** One Allied soldier recalled:"I can still remember the shriek from one of my platoon when a booby trap… literally blew him to pieces"*

was to make it easier for 10 Corps to break into the open to the north. The Desert Rats were not to get drawn into attritional 'dogfights', they were to husband their strength for pursuit once the breakout was achieved. Monty allowed himself full credit for the idea of delivering the main blow in the north and avoiding the tried tactic of a flanking attack from the south: "I planned to attack neither on my left flank nor on my right flank, but somewhere right of centre; having broken in, I could then direct my forces to the right or to the left as seemed most profitable."

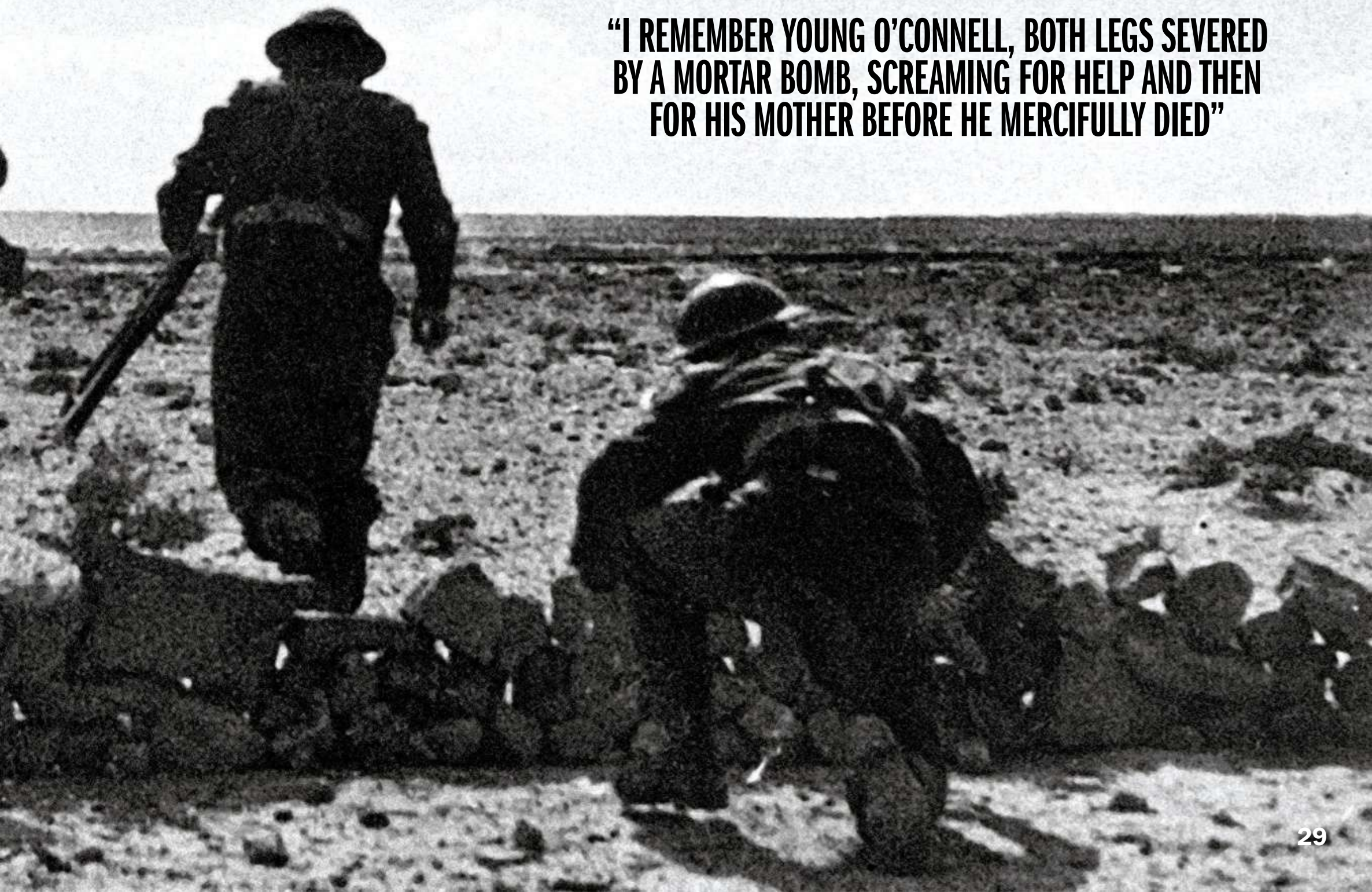
Leese was to put four divisions into the attack. Nearest the coast the 9th Australian would have the extreme right, breaking in eastwards from Tel el Eisa. Next, the 51st Highland division was charged with assaulting towards Kidney Ridge. Then the 2nd New Zealand Division would strike towards the western extremity of Miteiriya Ridge with, on the far left, the 1st South African Division attacking the centre. The front stretched for 7km with a depth, on the right, of 8km shrinking to 4km on the left. Horrocks was to launch his offensive, diversions aside, on a narrower front with the 7th Armoured and 44th Division striking out south of Ruweisat Ridge.

In the main this was to convince the Axis forces that the main blow was indeed falling in the south and to fix 21st Panzer's full attention here. Secondary objectives included attacks on Himeimat and Taqa Plateau, but these were not to be pressed home in the face of strong opposition. An intense artillery barrage, the most potent ever seen since 1918, would begin the fight at 21.40 on 23 October. The guns would deluge German artillery with a weight of counter-battery fire before moving to plaster the forward defences. A rolling barrage would cosset the attacking infantry battalions, proceeding in 'lifts'. With a sufficiency of anti-tank guns in theatre, the whole weight of field artillery could be brought to bear under a centralised fire plan.

As ever, the troops saw things in a rather more immediate and personal light: "We set off. Excited, breathless. And that sort of orchestral music of the continuous guns in the background," recalled one soldier. "We wondered if the Jerry saw it that way! I remember seeing a captain walking behind a Scorpion. Intent on supervising the job. This tank had a barrel fastened across its nose which revolved. Fastened by one end were chains which whirled round and thumped the ground ahead. Supposed to blow up any mines in its path. Something seemed to worry the captain and he literally screamed at the crew and someone nearby. On edge, poor devil. Some job!"

Another man recounted: "So we set off late one evening, two battalions, two companies up in line abreast across a thousand yards of minefields, led by an officer on a compass bearing and Lieutenant-Colonel East using a stick as a result of a First World War wound. We were to advance behind a barrage of a thousand guns. There were casualties in the platoon on my right from one gun firing short or possibly from the enemy replying. I can still remember the shriek from one of my platoon when a booby trap on the barbed wire literally blew him to pieces… Eventually our leading platoon and the 1st /6th Queens on our left arrived in the middle of the Italian positions and some 20 to 30 Italians cheerfully gave themselves up and remained for the next 24 hours, withdrawing with us at the end of that time. The remainder of the Folgore Division, however, were made of sterner stuff and proceeded to inflict heavy casualties on us, using mortars and machine guns, firing from entrenched positions. I remember young O'Connell, both legs severed by a mortar bomb, screaming for help and then for his mother before he mercifully died."

"I REMEMBER YOUNG O'CONNELL, BOTH LEGS SEVERED BY A MORTAR BOMB, SCREAMING FOR HELP AND THEN FOR HIS MOTHER BEFORE HE MERCIFULLY DIED"



Operation Supercharge

After the initial sound and fury of Lightfoot, followed by a period of attritional dogfighting ("crumbling", as Monty called it) there was still no sign of a breakthrough. Rommel was stretched but not bursting. It is impossible to overstate the advantages that accrued to the Allies through control of the skies and the havoc wrought by Desert Air Force. Though armoured formations were mostly safe, movement of soft-skinned Axis vehicles during this critical 'dogfight' phase was continually interdicted by attack from the air.

Nor should the corrosive effect on morale be overlooked, as Montgomery himself observed: "The morale effect of air action is very great and out of all proportion to the material damage inflicted. In reverse direction, the sight and sound of our own air forces operating against the enemy have an equally satisfactory effect on our own troops." The damage inflicted upon Axis shipping was steadily increasing the pressure on Rommel's jugular. On 1 November two more Italian ships, Tripolino and Ostia, laden with fuel and ammunition, were sunk. Because the Germans were trying to fly in fuel stocks from Crete, Maleme airfield, site of the Axis landings in May 1941, was also bombed.

That there was progress and that, in a battle of attrition, the Allies were winning, could not be denied. But there was no great victory that could set the church bells, so long silent, ringing out. Moreover, as 8 November, the date fixed for the Operation Torch landings approached, Churchill needed a decision in the Western Desert. Much has been said about the 'long screwdriver' applied by Whitehall to the desert campaigns, usually to detrimental effect. Tradition in the British Army is for the local commander, while he receives his general orders from his superiors, to be permitted discretion as to how he puts these into effect.

"It was fairly clear to me that there had been consternation in Whitehall when I began to draw divisions into reserve on the 27th and 28th October, when I was getting ready for the final blow," said Montgomery. "Casey had been sent up to find out what was going on: Whitehall thought I was giving up, when in point of fact I was just about to win… I told him all about my plans and that I was certain of success; and de Guingand spoke to him very bluntly and told him to tell Whitehall not to bellyache. I never heard what signal was sent to London after the visit and

"WHITEHALL THOUGHT I WAS GIVING UP, WHEN IN POINT OF FACT I WAS JUST ABOUT TO WIN"

was too busy to bother about it. Anyway, I was certain the CIGS [Chief of the Imperial General Staff]would know what I was up to."

He then went on to assess the tactical position at El Alamein and the manner in which he intended to deliver his next major assault: "I decided on the night of 30/31 October the 9th Australian Division would attack strongly northwards to reach the sea; this would keep the enemy looking northwards. Then on the next night, 31 October/1 November, I would blow a deep hole in the enemy front just to the north of the original corridor; this hole would be made by 2nd New Zealand Division which would be reinforced by the 9th Armoured brigade and two infantry brigades; the operation would be under the command of 30 Corps. Through the gap I would pass 10 Corps with its armoured divisions… We already had the necessary divisions in reserve, and they had been resting and refitting… What in fact, I proposed to do was to deliver a hard blow with the right and follow it the next night with a knock-out blow with the left. The operation was christened SUPERCHARGE!"

This decisive phase of the battle lasted from 29 October to 4 November and effectively continued the process of attrition. Monty was aided by Hitler, who issued an order that no foot of ground should be yielded. Wisely, Rommel eventually ignored him. Monty switched his main drive to the north and gradually the weight of attacks fractured the Axis lines. This time the rupture was fatal.

For Rommel, the scale of this defeat was enormous. Assessments differ, but the Axis had lost something in the order of 30,000 prisoners, two-thirds Italian, and perhaps as many as 20,000 dead and wounded. Most of his Italian formations had been decimated and such transport as could be found reserved for German survivors. Out of nearly 250 tanks they could barely field three dozen, and though the Italians had more runners these were inferior and no match for Shermans. It was indeed not just the end of the beginning but for Nazi Germany the beginning of the end.

As the Allies pressed their advantage, Rommel eventually ignored Hitler's order not to retreat

Thousands of demoralised Italian troops surrendered during the fierce battle

The Second Battle of El Alamein was a decisive turning point in the Western Desert campaign

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EYES ON THE SAND

THE LONG RANGE DESERT GROUP AT EL ALAMEIN

Watching and reporting enemy movements, the LRDG served as Monty's eyes and ears in the build up to the decisive battle

WORDS **GAVIN MORTIMER**

September 1942 was one of the worst months that the Long Range Desert Group (LRDG) had experienced in North Africa. A series of raids launched by British special forces – including the Special Air Service (SAS) and the Special Boat Service (SBS) – against Libyan ports had resulted in the death, capture or injury of several of the LRDG's most experienced soldiers. Two officers, David Lloyd Owen and Nick Wilder, were in hospital beds recovering from wounds and one of the unit's best navigators, Mike Carr, had been captured by the Italians at Jalo.

The raids had been hastily planned and were too ambitious in scale, so it was a relief for the LRDG's commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Guy Prendergast, that their next task was a reversion to what they did best: reconnaissance.

That was the LRDG's original purpose, the idea which their founder, Ralph Bagnold, had sold to General Archibald Wavell in June 1940. He had submitted a proposal to the officer commanding the Middle East Command for a light reconnaissance force to penetrate deep into Libya to gather intelligence on the enemy: "Every vehicle of which, with a crew of three and a machine gun, was to carry its own supplies of food and water for three weeks, and its own petrol for 2500 miles [4,000km] of travel across average soft desert surface – equivalent in petrol consumption to some 2,400 miles [3,860km] of road," Bagnold had written.

Wavell thought it a splendid idea and told Bagnold to have his unit operational within six weeks. Prendergast succeeded Bagnold as the LRDG's CO in the summer of 1941 but the pair – both pre-war desert explorers – shared the same vision that the unit was essentially a reconnaissance force and not a raiding one, though it had the capability to launch attacks if necessary.

A little over a year since the founding of the LRDG, the Desert War had given birth to another special forces unit, the SAS, and while there was mutual respect there was also on the part of the LRDG a growing irritation with the SAS. "They were a gung-ho lot," remarked one LRDG man, Arthur Arger, about the SAS. "They were very good at what they did but they couldn't stop out for the length of time we did. If we were going to do something for the length of time we did, if we were going to do something like the SAS, we would go further afield and do it, and then go further afield still and do it. But the SAS could only do one thing and come back. They were short-term, we were long-term," he commented.

"THE SAS COULD ONLY DO ONE THING AND COME BACK. THEY WERE SHORT-TERM, WE WERE LONG-TERM"

Increasingly throughout 1942, the LRDG had been obliged to divert some of its precious time and resources to assist the SAS in logistics and navigation. In one memorandum to GHQ Cairo, Prendergast objected to being forced to play "universal aunt" to them.

Eventually, on the eve of the Second Battle of El Alamein, Lieutenant Colonel John Hackett, recently appointed officer in charge of light raiding forces in North Africa, summoned the LRDG and the SAS to his office. "One of the chief problems was to keep these little armies out of each other's way," he recalled. "There was the LRDG practising its intricately careful, cautious, skilful reconnaissance… but the SAS would come out to blow up some aeroplanes and they were very careless about it. Lovely men, but very careless and they would leave a lot of stuff around, and they would stir the thing up no end and out would come the Axis forces to see what had stirred it up, and they would find the LRDG."

It was imperative that this did not happen once the battle was underway; the LRDG was being tasked with conducting reconnaissance patrols – what they called 'road-watches' – while the SAS's instructions were to attack the Axis forces on the coastal roads. Hackett therefore "drew a line down the map like a medieval pope separating out the Italians

***Left:** The LRDG's main purpose was to conduct reconnaissance missions on the enemy*

***Right:** Two SAS men pictured in 1942. The LRDG considered the SAS to be too gung-ho*

***Below:** Each LRDG vehicle had a team of three, a machine gun and enough fuel to travel 4,000km*

LRDG patrols were praised for the accuracy of their reports on enemy troops, vehicles and weapons

Paddy Mayne, a founding member of the SAS, led raids on German airfields in North Africa

from the Portuguese in the Atlantic. And I said west of this line LRDG only, east of this [line] SAS only, and that kept them more or less out of each other's hair."

The line designated by Hackett was the 20th meridian of longitude east, which ran north to south through Jedabia, and that necessitated a move in October for the LRDG – whose strength was 25 officers and 278 other ranks – from their HQ at Fayoum to the oasis of Kufra, their base in the spring of 1941.

One of the LRDG officers sent to Kufra was Captain Alastair Timpson of the Guards Patrol. On arriving he learned "of the great victory at Alamein… as the enemy recoiled westwards the road-watch was now of increased importance". Deprived of their ports in eastern Libya as they withdrew, the Germans' only line of supply and communication was in Tripolitania in the west of the country.

The first LRDG patrol deployed on a road-watch had left Kufra on the same day as the Second Alamein offensive began, 23 October, and headed north, 1100km west of El Alamein. Under the command of Captain Ken Spicer, the patrol's orders were to conduct a census of the vehicles using the Benghazi-Tripoli road.

They began their task at 7pm on 30 October until relieved by a New Zealand patrol nine days later. Concealed within desert shrub in pairs at a time, one observed the road through binoculars and made a vocal record of every vehicle that passed down the road in either direction: motorbikes, staff cars, oil tankers, 15cwt trucks, 30cwt trucks and, if possible, what was inside. The other soldier noted it all in his journal, and at nightfall they trudged back to where the rest of the patrol was camped and the intelligence was radioed back to Kufra from a wireless truck.

It was a strange existence for the LRDG soldiers, a mix of tension when surveying the road and tedium when off-duty. "It was intensely boring because when you weren't actually down on a two-man road-watch you were back by the trucks, and all you could do was lay under them all day," recalled Ron Cryer, one of Spicer's patrol. "You couldn't walk about because you might attract attention from the road."

Spicer's patrol recorded an average of just under 100 vehicles each day travelling along the road in both directions. Within three days, the New Zealanders were radioing back to LRDG HQ at Kufra that enemy transport was streaming westward at a rate of 3,500 vehicles a day.

As the Axis forces withdrew from the onslaught of the Eighth Army, the LRDG kept up a continual flow of intelligence, noting in November that there were more Afrika Korps heading west than travelling in the other direction towards the enemy. It was also recorded that the Germans going west were "in much better form that those going east, judging by the shouts they gave each other when they passed".

Each day hundreds, sometimes thousands, of Germans passed underneath their noses. On occasion they came even closer – unpleasantly so. Alexander Stewart and a comrade were camouflaged among some scrub on a road-watch when a German convoy pulled off the roadside. "About 100 yards from us they got out of the trucks and walked as if they were coming straight towards us," recalled Stewart. The two LRDG men watched as the Germans approached the scrub, then turned, unbuttoned their breeches and answered the call of nature.

Stewart's patrol was scheduled to be relieved by one commanded by Timpson at the end of November. By now the Eighth Army was in possession of the ports of Benghazi and Agedabia and hard on the Axis heels. The LRDG were only 160km west, watching the road from Agedabia to Nofilia.

There was an LRDG adage, recalled Carr, that "if you go 500 miles [800km] behind the lines, though it sounds spectacular, you're as safe as houses because nobody's going to suspect you. It's when you're only 50 miles [80km] behind the frontline that everyone is trigger-happy."

Timpson's patrol discovered the truth of that statement as they motored towards their observation point. On the morning of 24 November he spotted eight armoured cars

"IF YOU GO 500 MILES BEHIND THE LINES, THOUGH IT SOUNDS SPECTACULAR, YOU'RE AS SAFE AS HOUSES BECAUSE NOBODY'S GOING TO SUSPECT YOU"

***Left:** An LRDG vehicle pictured in Cairo, Egypt, during the arduous North African campaign*

***Right:** Intelligence officer and desert explorer Bill Kennedy Shaw (left) served with the LRDG*

***Below:** As well as the enemy, LRDG patrols had to battle the treacherous desert conditions*

“THE LRDG, 20 MEN IN FIVE TRUCKS AND TWO JEEPS IN TOTAL, RESPONDED WITH BURSTS FROM THEIR TWIN VICKERS K MACHINE GUNS, BUT TIMPSON KNEW THEY WERE HOPELESSLY OUTNUMBERED”

***Above:** Men and vehicles from both the LRDG and SAS pictured in North Africa*

on an escarpment. Doubling back, Timpson soon spotted six more vehicles approaching, guns blazing. The LRDG, 20 men in five trucks and two jeeps in total, responded with bursts from their twin Vickers K machine guns, but Timpson knew they were hopelessly outnumbered and that their only hope was a breakout.

He drove his jeep up and over an escarpment, followed by two of the five 30cwt Ford trucks. “While bumping along we exchanged shots with the enemy at fairly close range, but gradually we pulled away from them,” said Timpson. “Two chased us for about ten miles [16km]. We had to try to lose our tracks as we went so I followed various old enemy tracks, turning off them abruptly in a wadi bed and then dodging this way and that behind small hills.”

Timpson and nine of his men managed to escape but the other half of the patrol had been captured. Undeterred, they continued to the road-watch, which they undertook from behind a rocky outcrop 360 metres from the road below.

Now that the LRDG were so far west they encountered another difficulty: the attitude of the Bedouin who, unlike the Senussi in the east of Libya, considered themselves friends of the Germans. On finishing one road-watch, Timpson and the soldier with him walked into a Bedouin camp in search of water. “The Bedouin were suspicious of us,” said Timpson. “They sat around us in a half circle and asked us threateningly if we were British. On assuring them we were Germans, they became less menacing.”

Another LRDG patrol encountered two Bedouin who demanded tea and rations from the two men watching the road. If they weren’t forthcoming, said the Bedouin, they would report their position to the Germans. One of the LRDG men agreed to the blackmail and beckoned the Bedouin to follow. Once they were out of sight of the road, the LRDG men strangled the pair.

Another danger was enemy reconnaissance aircraft. Not far from where Timpson’s patrol was conducting its road-watch, A and B squadrons of the SAS rendezvoused at a remote spot called Bir Zalten south of the coastal town of El Agheila. Paddy Mayne’s A Squadron had spent the last six weeks raiding airfields and roads to the east, but they were now instructed by Lieutenant Colonel David Stirling to harry the Germans further west on the road from Nofilia to Sirte; Stirling’s B Squadron would operate even further west, around Tripoli. The reconnaissance aircraft that flew slowly over the desert weren’t looking for the LRDG but for the SAS.

By the second week of December, the Axis forces were withdrawing in such numbers that the LRDG struggled to keep up. “The density [of traffic] grew so heavy that one could not write fast enough,” said Timpson. “It was only possible to keep the record going by quickly making a list every ten minutes of the different classifications of vehicles, troops, stores, equipment and unit signals, and adding a mark against each type as it passed, in the manner of scoring at cricket.”

Nevertheless, the German retreat was disciplined and the Afrika Korps were far from demoralised. There was also plenty of fight left in them, as they demonstrated on 22 December when they spotted a New Zealand LRDG patrol, commanded by Lieutenant Ron Tinker, close to the Tripoli Road. In the fight that ensued six of the eight Kiwis were captured.

The day before the New Zealanders were caught, Eighth Army issued fresh instructions to the LRDG. The road-watches were at an end; now they were to undertake topographical reconnaissance for the next stage of the Desert War – the advance beyond Tripoli towards Tunisia.

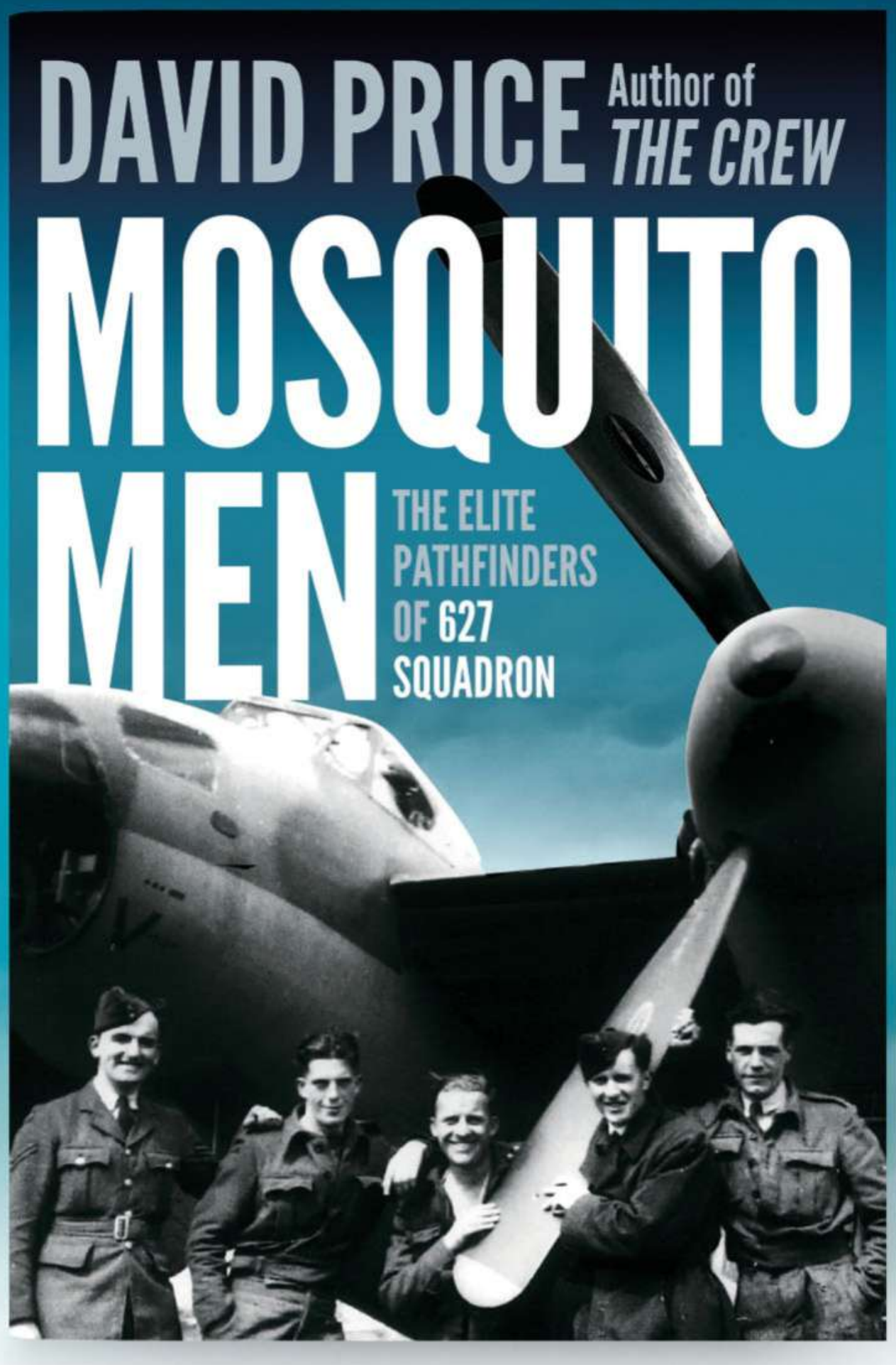
The LRDG’s contribution to the Second Battle of El Alamein had been small but significant, as noted by the director of military intelligence in Cairo, who in a report in December remarked: “Not only is the standard of accuracy and observation exceptionally high but the patrols are familiar with the most recent illustration of enemy vehicles and weapons… without their reports we should frequently have been in doubt as to the enemy’s intentions, when knowledge of them was all important.”

***Below:** David Lloyd Owen (left), one of the LRDG’s most experienced officers, was wounded in a raid*

All images: Gavin Mortimer

The story of one of the most remarkable –
and feared – British aircrafts of the Second World War:

THE DE HAVILLAND DH.98 MOSQUITO FIGHTER-BOMBER.



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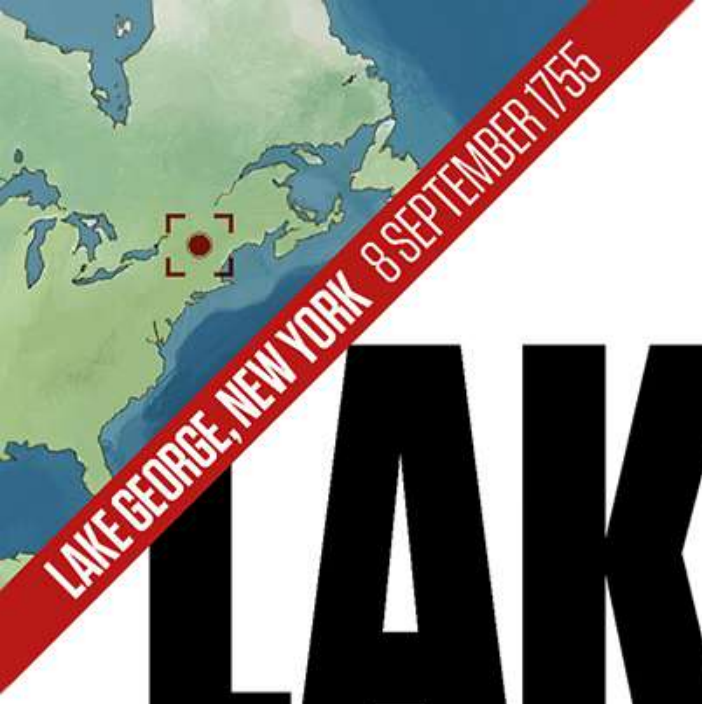

LAKE GEORGE

In the mid-18th century, with the European colonisation in North America, Britain found itself at war with its old rival France. Fought over three separate engagements, the Battle of Lake George, in New York province, was a much-needed victory for the British and helped them regain the upper hand during the French and Indian War

WORDS **DAVID SMITH**

The Battle of Lake George was actually three connected engagements, fought on 8 September 1755, which resulted in a victory for the British. A British expedition to capture the fort at Crown Point, in the north-east of New York province, became a cat-and-mouse game with French forces, with roughly equal numbers fighting a fierce and costly series of actions. Although the French had the better of the early fighting after ambushing a marching column, the British turned things around to claim a solid tactical triumph and solidify their position around Lake George.

Background

As the French and Indian War (1754-63) got underway, the British had ambitious plans to turf the French out of North America once and for all. A major expedition, under General Edward Braddock, was organised in the summer of 1755, targeting the French forts in Arcadia, Crown Point on Lake Champlain and Fort Niagara. The aim was to eradicate the French presence in the Ohio Valley.

At the time, French colonial holdings in North America were far bigger than those of Britain, stretching from Canada down to New Orleans. Borders were often poorly defined, opening up the potential for flare-ups with neighbouring colonies and Native American tribes. From the early 18th century, therefore, the British had encouraged mass immigration into its North

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A painted woodcut depicting the fighting near Lake George – showing British, French and native forces involved in the battle

American colonies. Large numbers of Germans and Scots-Irish poured into America, increasing the population of the colonies by 500 per cent and turning them into a major economic powerhouse for the mother country.

Although pleased at the emergence of this new and lucrative empire, Britain started to worry that the colonies might one day make a bid for independence, especially now their 'Englishness' had been diluted by the influx of other Europeans. Of more immediate concern was the possibility of the French or Spanish swooping in to take over the colonies, making it imperative to rid the continent of rival foreign influences.

When hostilities broke out once more between Britain and France in 1754, it was seen as the perfect time to expel the French from North America and tighten control over the colonies. As the Seven Years' War (1756-63) raged in Europe, the French and Indian War (which began a little earlier but is considered part of the same conflict), would settle the question of which European power was to be dominant in North America.

General Braddock's expedition was intended to answer that question in Britain's favour. With a force of 2,400 men, he marched on Fort Duquesne, but was decisively defeated at the Battle of the Monongahela on 9 July 1755.

The defeat sent shockwaves through the colonies. Braddock had 1,000 British regulars under his command, from the 44th and 48th Regiments of Foot, but they were comprehensively outfought by the French and their Native American allies. British casualties were around 900, while the French lost fewer than 100. This was a blow to British military prestige as well, so when a second expedition was organised, less than a month after Braddock's disastrous defeat, there was an awful lot riding on it.

Fort St Frederic, at Crown Point, was considered the key to French control of Canada and Colonel William Johnson, an Irishman who had come to the colonies in 1738, was ordered to capture it. He took command of a column of around 3,000 men, including 200 Mohawk Indians. Johnson, who was given a promotion to major general for the expedition, had excellent ties with the Mohawks, including one of their 'sachems' (chiefs) Theyanoguin, known to the British as King Hendrick.

OPPOSING FORCES

BRITISH & ALLIED	VS	FRENCH & ALLIED
COMMANDERS William Johnson, Phineas Lyman, Theyanoguin		**COMMANDERS** Baron de Dieskau, Jacques Legardeur de Saint-Pierre
TROOPS 3,000 (2,800 provincial troops and 200 Mohawks)		**TROOPS** 1,700 men (260 French grenadiers, 800 Canadians and 700 Native American warriors)

Johnson's army was made up exclusively of provincial soldiers, who had a poor reputation; the militia men were reportedly 'despised' by the British for their lack of discipline and fighting spirit. The coming battle was to be a vindication for them.

Johnson intended to move his men via Lake St Sacrament and Lake Champlain to attack Crown Point, but it would be a perilous undertaking – the French outnumbered him, with around 6,000 men in the fort under the command of the German-born Jean-Armand, the Baron de Dieskau. Fortunately for the British, events would conspire to make the ensuing battle far more evenly contested.

The two sides reposition

From his base at Albany, Johnson planned his move against Crown Point. Major General Phineas Lyman was given the honour of leading the first wave, a vanguard that advanced from Albany on 1 August and built a fort on the approaches to Lake St Sacrament. This strongpoint, originally called Fort Lyman but later changed to Fort Edward in honour of the king's brother, provided a springboard for the expedition, but also shaped the coming battle.

Johnson left Albany a few days later, passed Fort Lyman, and reached Lake St Sacrament on 28 August, renaming it Lake George. Whether or not the new name would stick would depend on the events of the next few days.

On 3 September, unaware of the British move, Dieskau detached a portion of his army to begin construction of defensive works between Lakes George and Champlain. These works would become Fort Carillon, which would later be renamed Fort Ticonderoga and would

***Below:** A depiction of General William Johnson saving the life of Jean-Armand, Baron de Dieskau at the Battle of Lake George*

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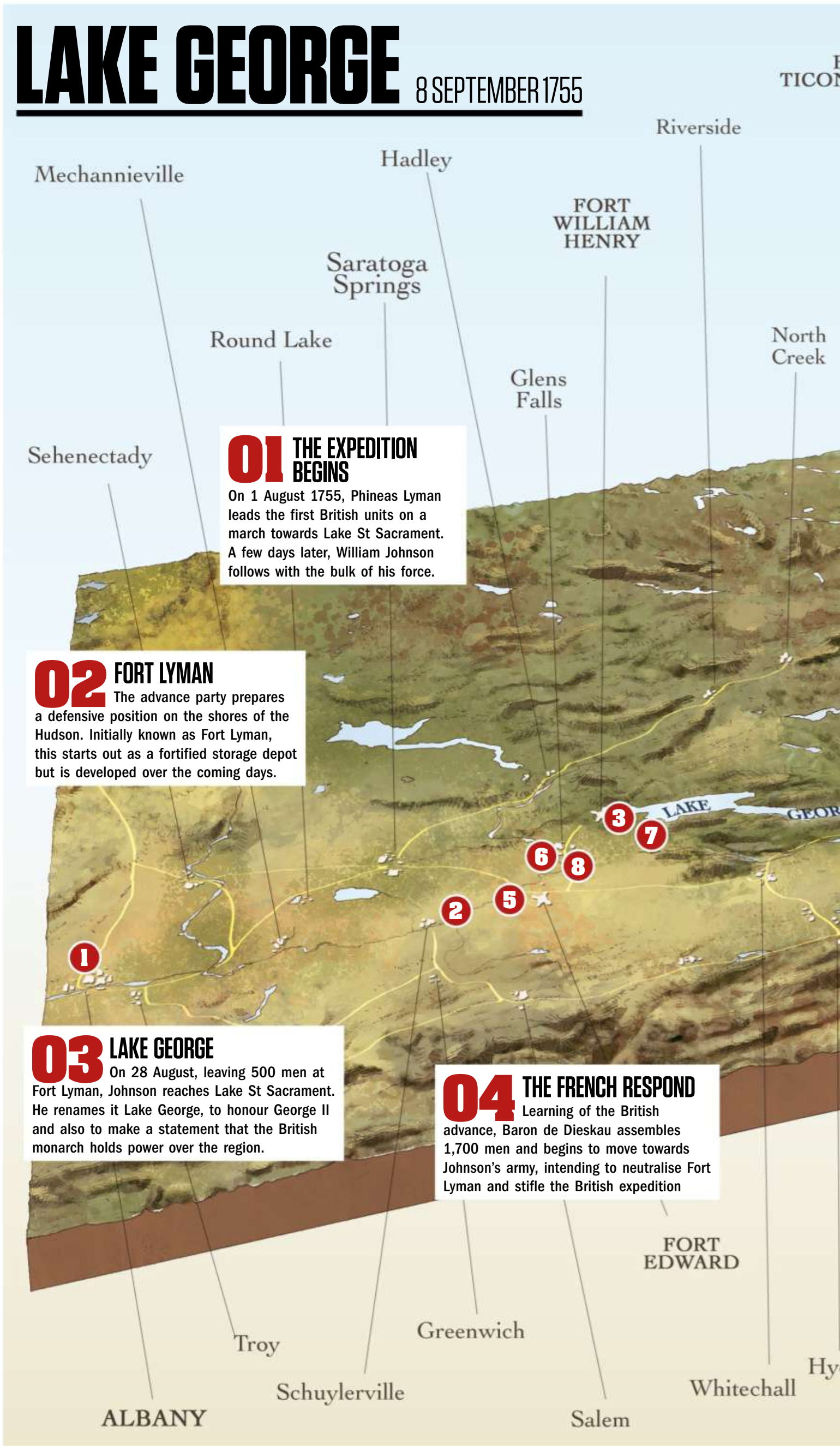
LAKE GEORGE
8 SEPTEMBER 1755
01 THE EXPEDITION BEGINS
On 1 August 1755, Phineas Lyman leads the first British units on a march towards Lake St Sacrament. A few days later, William Johnson follows with the bulk of his force.
02 FORT LYMAN
The advance party prepares a defensive position on the shores of the Hudson. Initially known as Fort Lyman, this starts out as a fortified storage depot but is developed over the coming days.
03 LAKE GEORGE
On 28 August, leaving 500 men at Fort Lyman, Johnson reaches Lake St Sacrament. He renames it Lake George, to honour George II and also to make a statement that the British monarch holds power over the region.
04 THE FRENCH RESPOND
Learning of the British advance, Baron de Dieskau assembles 1,700 men and begins to move towards Johnson's army, intending to neutralise Fort Lyman and stifle the British expedition
Mechannieville
Hadley
Riverside
FORT WILLIAM HENRY
Saratoga Springs
Round Lake
Glens Falls
North Creek
Sehenectady
LAKE GEOR
FORT EDWARD
Troy
Greenwich
Schuylerville
Whitechall
ALBANY
Salem
1
2
3
5
6
7
8

Map illustration: Rocio Espin

07 ASSAULT ON THE CAMP

Johnson's men, with the valuable assistance of three cannons, fend off a brave but doomed assault by French grenadiers, as Dieskau's Canadian and Native American troops refuse to attack the hastily prepared defences.

08 'THE BLOODY POND'

At the site of the original French ambush, retreating Canadian and Native American warriors are surprised by a relieving force sent out from Fort Lyman. The Battle of Lake George ends where it began, with more heavy casualties and the British have a solid tactical victory.

06 'THE BLOODY MORNING SCOUT'

Learning that Johnson is also on the march, towards him, Dieskau sets an ambush at Rocky Brook. Although not perfectly executed, the ambush sends the provincials under Ephraim Williams reeling back towards the main British camp at Lake George.

05 DIESKAU IS FRUSTRATED

Due to dissent among his Iroquois contingent, Dieskau is forced to call off his planned attack on Fort Lyman, which lies at his mercy. Instead, he sets off towards Johnson's camp on the shores of Lake George.

***Right:** Native American forces fought on both sides during the Battle of Lake George*

"THE MILITIA MEN WERE REPORTEDLY 'DESPISED' BY THE BRITISH FOR THEIR LACK OF DISCIPLINE AND FIGHTING SPIRIT. THE COMING BATTLE WAS TO BE A VINDICATION FOR THEM"

play an important role in both the French and Indian War and the War of Independence.

While this work was going on, Dieskau was informed of the construction of Fort Lyman. Recognising the danger this posed, he organised a force of 1,700 men, loaded them into canoes, and set off down Lake Champlain.

This detached French corps was very similar in strength to Johnson's expedition. In one of the earliest accounts of the campaign, Morris Patterson Ferris detailed the makeup of the French force, explaining that there were 260 French grenadiers (from the Regiment de la Reine and the Regiment de Languedoc), 800 Canadians and 700 Native American warriors – mostly Iroquois and Caughnawaga Mohawks. By the evening of 7 September these men were within a mile of Fort Lyman and planning to attack the next day. The goal was to destroy as much of the equipment Johnson had brought north with him as possible, forcing him to abandon his expedition.

The British garrison at Fort Lyman numbered around 500, and Dieskau's corps would have been able to take it but for a disagreement with the 300-strong Iroquois contingent of his command. The Iroquois held a conference and reported that they would not attack the British on their own soil. This was a stated principle of their involvement with the French, but Dieskau and others believed the real reason was that they did not relish the idea of attacking a defensive position boasting numerous cannon.

***Above:** Jean-Armand, Baron de Dieskau, was shot several times during the battle*

Disappointed, Dieskau had no option but to call off his planned attack. At the same time, Johnson had learned of Dieskau's move against Fort Lyman. Although he had been outmanoeuvred, he hoped to still be able to get back in time to save the fort and sent 1,000 men southwards. He also dispatched a messenger to tell the fort that help was on its way, but this man fell into Dieskau's hands and revealed the British plans.

The Mohawk forces

King Hendrick was a Mohawk chief who is the subject of many colourful legends. His story is complicated by the fact that he shared a name with another chief whose life overlapped his. For generations, people thought the two men were actually one. This led to the myth that Hendrick was 95 years old at the battle of Lake George, when he was actually a far more sprightly 63.

Hendrick was concerned at the possibility of Mohawk fighting Mohawk, and had talked to Johnson about this, drawing an assurance that he would not be ordered to lead his New York Mohawks against their Canadian cousins. Hendrick was also a good enough English-speaker to function as a translator between the two groups in Johnson's force and he was widely respected by both British and Native Americans.

Much of his reported input into the Battle of Lake George, however, is almost certainly apocryphal. One tale revolves around the size of the relieving force sent south by Johnson. Originally, he is rumoured to have detailed only 500 men for the party, to which Hendrick allegedly said: "If they are to fight, they are too few. If to be killed, they are too many."

Whether or not this exchange actually took place. Johnson eventually decided to

This late-19th early-20th century postcard depicts militiamen taking part in the battle

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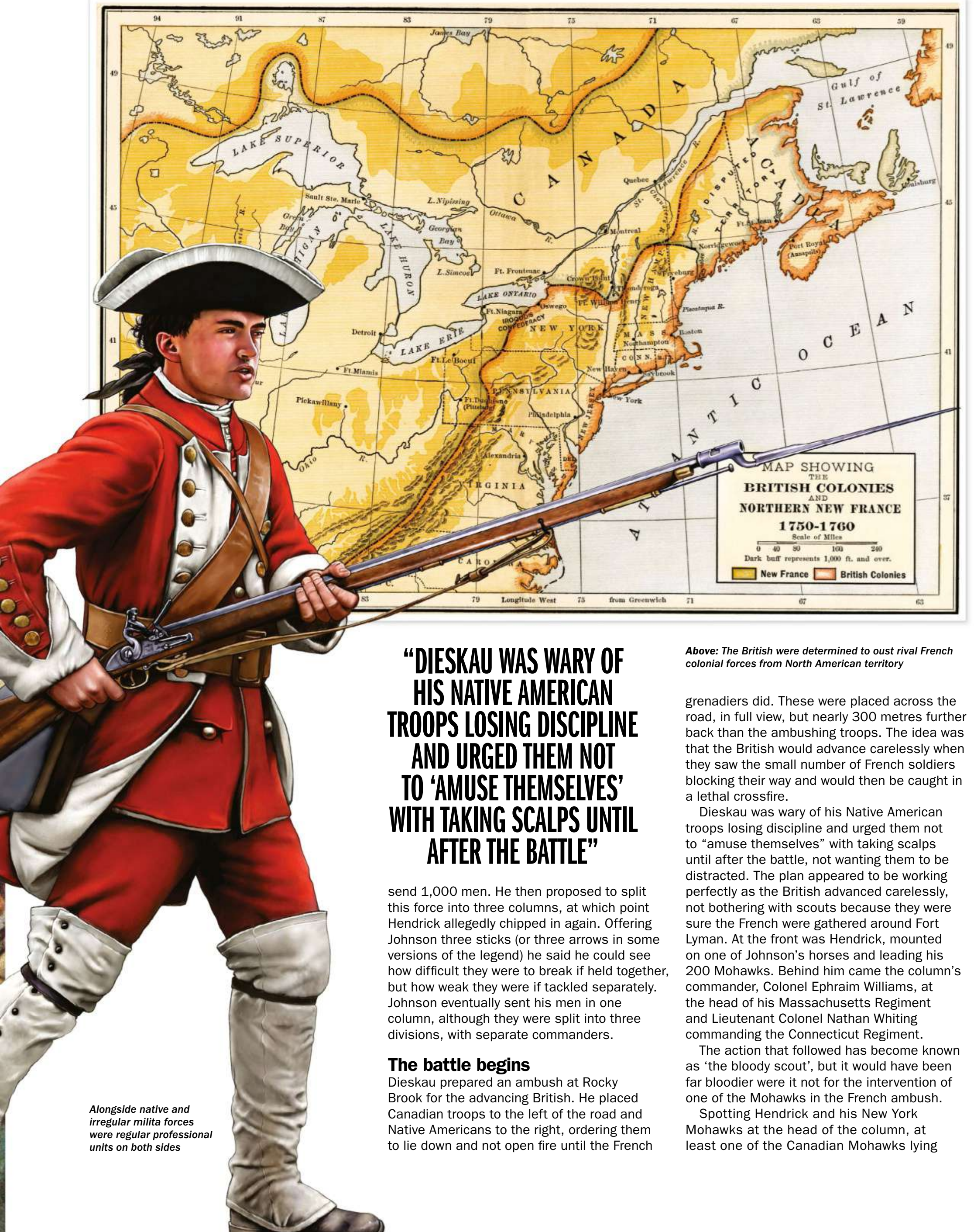

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Above: The British were determined to oust rival French colonial forces from North American territory

“DIESKAU WAS WARY OF HIS NATIVE AMERICAN TROOPS LOSING DISCIPLINE AND URGED THEM NOT TO ‘AMUSE THEMSELVES’ WITH TAKING SCALPS UNTIL AFTER THE BATTLE”

send 1,000 men. He then proposed to split this force into three columns, at which point Hendrick allegedly chipped in again. Offering Johnson three sticks (or three arrows in some versions of the legend) he said he could see how difficult they were to break if held together, but how weak they were if tackled separately. Johnson eventually sent his men in one column, although they were split into three divisions, with separate commanders.

The battle begins

Dieskau prepared an ambush at Rocky Brook for the advancing British. He placed Canadian troops to the left of the road and Native Americans to the right, ordering them to lie down and not open fire until the French grenadiers did. These were placed across the road, in full view, but nearly 300 metres further back than the ambushing troops. The idea was that the British would advance carelessly when they saw the small number of French soldiers blocking their way and would then be caught in a lethal crossfire.

Dieskau was wary of his Native American troops losing discipline and urged them not to “amuse themselves” with taking scalps until after the battle, not wanting them to be distracted. The plan appeared to be working perfectly as the British advanced carelessly, not bothering with scouts because they were sure the French were gathered around Fort Lyman. At the front was Hendrick, mounted on one of Johnson’s horses and leading his 200 Mohawks. Behind him came the column’s commander, Colonel Ephraim Williams, at the head of his Massachusetts Regiment and Lieutenant Colonel Nathan Whiting commanding the Connecticut Regiment.

The action that followed has become known as ‘the bloody scout’, but it would have been far bloodier were it not for the intervention of one of the Mohawks in the French ambush.

Spotting Hendrick and his New York Mohawks at the head of the column, at least one of the Canadian Mohawks lying

Alongside native and irregular milita forces were regular professional units on both sides

in ambush fired his musket into the air in warning. Although the trap had been prematurely sprung, the British column was still in serious trouble. Hendrick himself went down in the first hail of bullets, his horse shot out from under him. Although he was unharmed, he found himself pinned beneath his horse and was fatally bayonetted by one of his enemies. Colonel Williams was able to deploy his men on a hilltop, but he quickly fell as well, leaving command to Whiting, who quickly and sensibly ordered a retreat.

The noise of the ambush could be heard back at the main British camp, and Johnson quickly sent a further 300 provincials to assist. The remainder of his men began preparing defensive works, using wagons, boats and chopped-down trees to form breastworks. This would be the stage for the second phase of the battle.

Before that, however, there was the small matter of disengaging from the French ambush. With the help of the 300 reinforcements, Whiting was able to stage a fighting withdrawal, and French losses were high as they pursued recklessly. Among the fallen was Jacques Legardeur de Saint-Pierre, the commander

"THEY WERE TAKEN COMPLETELY BY SURPRISE AND DECISIVELY DEFEATED, WITH THE BODIES BEING THROWN INTO THE BROOK. SO MANY CORPSES FOUND THEIR WAY INTO THE WATER THAT IT BECAME KNOWN AS THE 'BLOODY POND'"

of the Canadians and Native Americans in Dieskau's force.

The second stage of the battle

Despite the British recovery, Dieskau hoped that his men would be able to follow the British into their camp, so close behind them that the defenders would be unable to fire upon them.

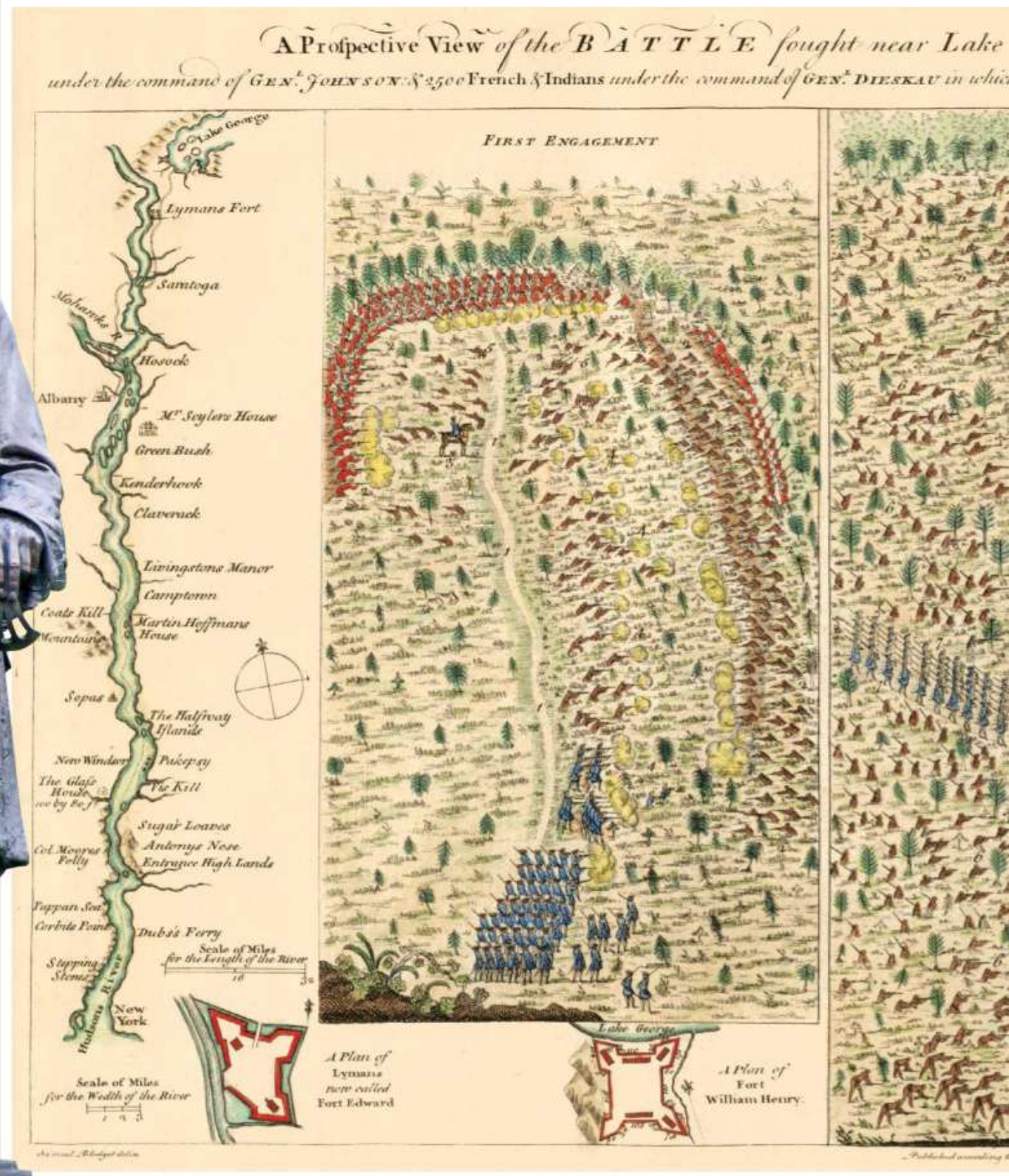
He was to be disappointed once again. Having seen his ambush fail to deliver a decisive blow, his Native American troops now proved unwilling to storm into the British camp. Deterred by the defensive works, which included three cannons, and demoralised by the loss of Saint-Pierre, they refused to advance. It was left to the small number of French grenadiers to lead the assault.

Dieskau arranged them in column formation, but this was not the type of column that would terrorise European battlefields in the Napoleonic Wars, being just six men wide. Nevertheless, it advanced bravely against the British position.

A dense column of men makes a fine target for cannon, and the three British guns, commanded by Captain William Eyre (the only regular British officer in Johnson's little army), pummelled them mercilessly with grapeshot. Shifting their attack away from the guns and against the British left, the grenadiers now ran up against determined resistance from three regiments.

Johnson had been hit in the thigh early in the action and taken to his tent. Next to fall wounded was the French commander, making this an unusually costly battle in the upper echelons of both forces. Dieskau was first

***Below:** A statue dedicated to the Battle of Lake George, in New York State*



hit in the leg, and while he was being treated by an aide (who was washing the wound with brandy) he was hit again in the knee and thigh. He was taken to Johnson's tent, where he had to be protected from Mohawks who were eager to avenge their fallen commander.

Lyman took command of the British camp, but by now the fight had been knocked out of the French. Around 4pm, the provincials and Mohawks stormed out of their defensive works and forced their enemies into a headlong retreat.

The bloody pond

The final act of the battle solidified the British victory. From Fort Lyman, the fighting could clearly be heard and Colonel Blanchard, the commanding officer, despatched 250 men to offer assistance. These men fell upon the French baggage, scattering the guard and then advancing to Rocky Brook, site of the French ambush earlier in the day. Here, they found around 300 Canadians and Native Americans. Depending on which report you read, these were either resting after the battle, or retreating from the British camp in good order. Whichever was the case, they were taken completely by surprise and decisively defeated, with the bodies being thrown into the brook. So many corpses found their way into the water that it became known as the 'bloody pond'.

The three-stage Battle of Lake George was over. Although it had started well for the French, it had turned into a solid British victory and recovered some of the pride lost on the Monongahela two months earlier.

The aftermath

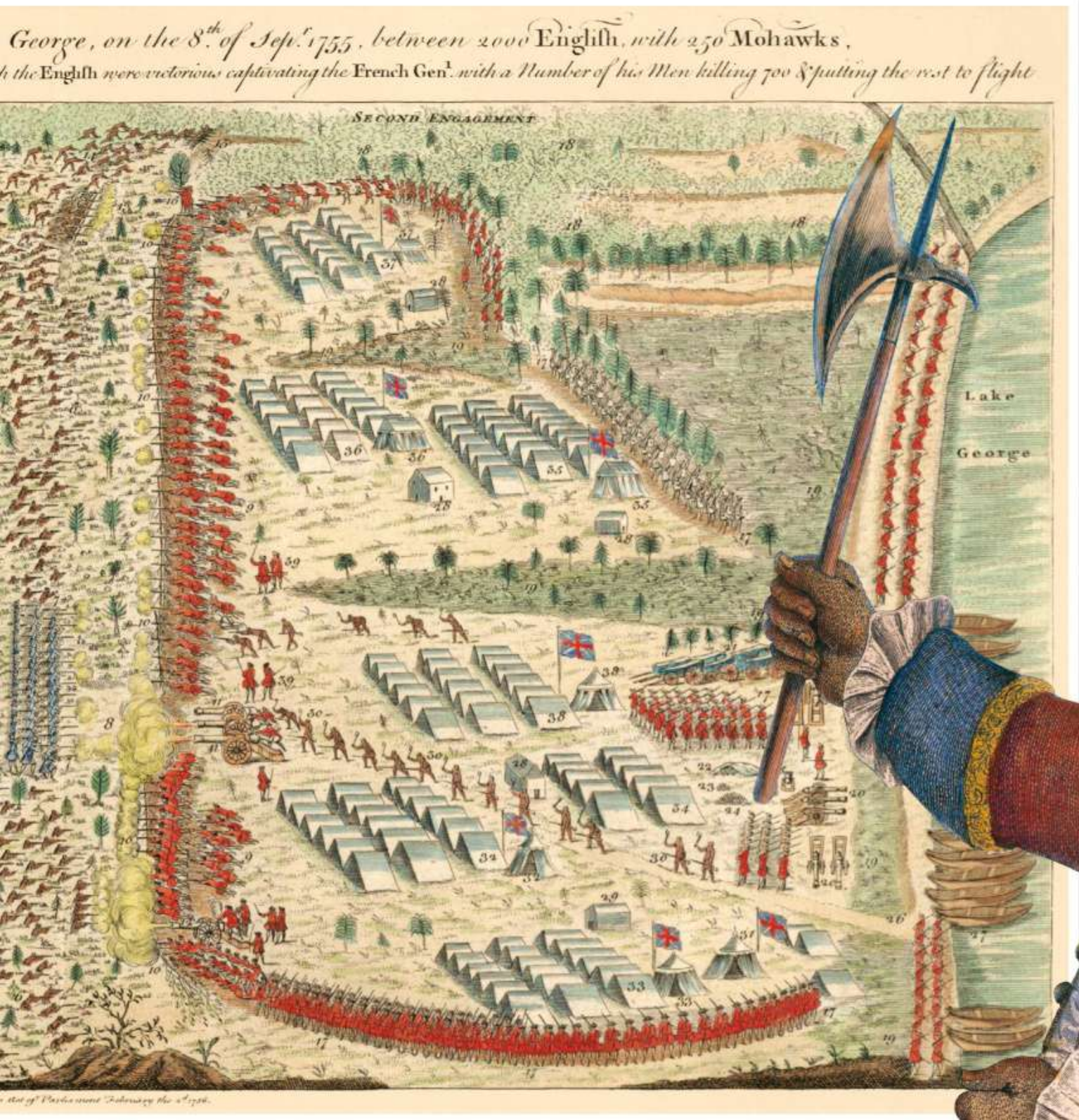
The battle has long been overlooked by historians. Historian William R Griffith wrote that it was far more significant than is usually allowed. "Strategically, although the battle did not capture the stone fort at Crown Point," he claimed, "it did prevent the French from proceeding any farther south into the interior of the colony of New York and sent them scurrying back north."

The victory also secured the use of Lake George (51km long) as a conduit for the British to move men and materiel northwards from New York, waterborne transport being far more convenient (and speedy) than travelling through the American wilderness on rough roads and forest paths.

Losses from the battle have proved difficult to ascertain, and initial estimates of French casualties appear far too high. Johnson himself believed he had killed or wounded over 500 of the French force. This seems unlikely, as that would be almost a third of the men sent into battle that day. Even the French grenadiers, carved up by the British artillery in the assault of Johnson's camp, had only lost a third of their number.

Johnson reported 262 colonial soldiers killed or wounded, along with 38 Native Americans. No fewer than 20 officers, including Hendrick and Williams, were killed. It seems highly likely that the French suffered similar losses, although debate continues as to the exact amount.

Johnson solidified the British position by building Fort William Henry on the shores of Lake George, but he never did advance on Crown Point as originally planned. Fort William Henry would fall to the French later in the war and it was not until 1759, the 'annus mirabilis', that British fortunes took a decisive turn and a string of victories saw them ultimately evict the French from the North American continent.


George, on the 8th of Sept.r 1755, between 2000 English, with 250 Mohawks,
the English were victorious captivating the French Gen.l with a Number of his Men killing 700 & putting the rest to flight
SECOND ENGAGEMENT
Lake
George

***Left:** A near contemporary depiction of the battle, showing two of the distinct engagements*

***Below:** Mowhawk leader Theyanoguin, aka King Hendrick, fought on the British side and was killed in the battle*

FURTHER READING

- ***The French-Indian War 1754-1760***, Daniel Marston, (Osprey Publishing, 2002)
- ***The Making and Unmaking of Empires***, PJ Marshall, (Oxford University Press, 2005)
- ***The Battle of Lake George***, William R Griffith, (Arcadia Publishing, 2021)

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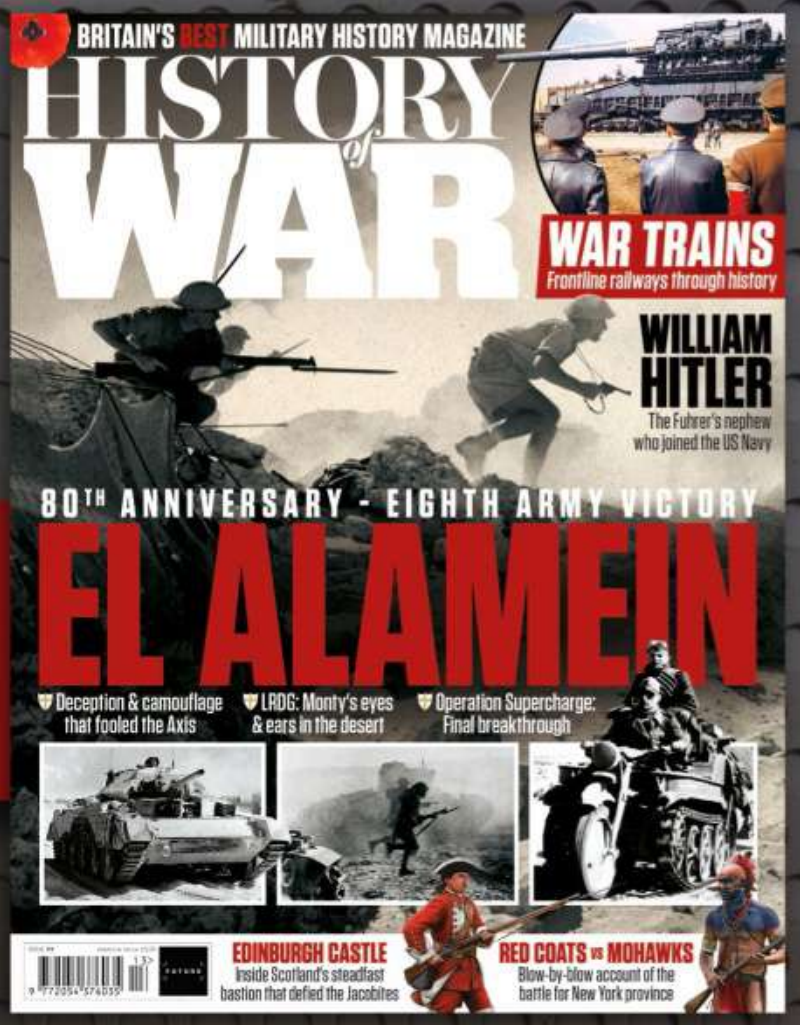
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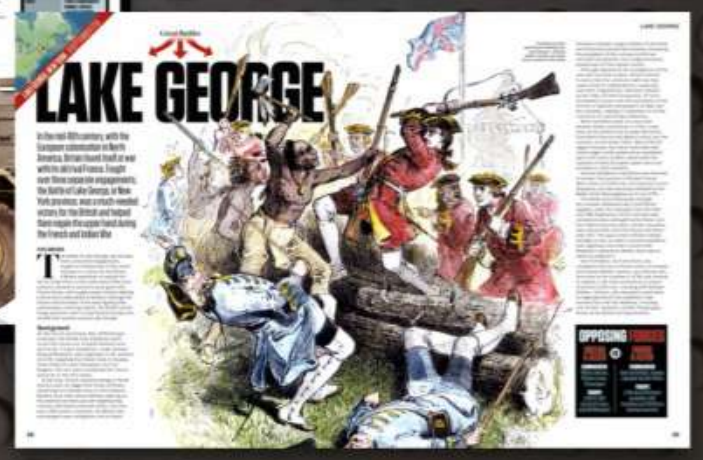

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THE HITLER WHO FOUGHT FOR THE ALLIES

WORDS **MICHAEL G STROUD**

The estranged half-nephew of the Nazi leader, William Patrick Hitler led his own wartime crusade against his half-uncle across the ocean. William's story is one of family drama, FBI investigations and eventually the taking up of arms against the Axis

The name Hitler evokes many feelings and emotions to this very day: hatred, evil, monster and warmonger to name but a few. But what about patriot? Even more specific, Allied patriot? William Patrick Hitler struck out to forge his own path, to the ire of his controlling uncle, which would eventually lead him to the United States along with his mother, where he would play his part in the fight against 'Uncle Adolf' and his Nazi regime.

William's story truly begins with that of his mother, Bridget Elizabeth Dowling of Dublin. It was here in 1910 during a horse show that Bridget met a young waiter by the name of Alois Hitler. After a four-month courtship, much to the disapproval of Bridget's father, the couple eloped to London. Their relationship was contentious from the beginning as Alois, the half-brother of Adolf, would separate from Bridget (and vice versa due to allegations of abuse) and get back together with her numerous times. The birth of William on 12 March 1911, in Liverpool, did nothing to assuage the volatility of his tempestuous father. Eventually Alois, who "ha[d] his brother Adolf's dictatorial disposition" according to William, would abandon them both in 1913, returning to Germany, where he would take another wife. The following years would find his mother working in the box office of the Olympia Theatre in Liverpool, among other jobs, to try and make ends meet for the two.

William would go on to be educated as an accountant through his time at St Marcy College in Liverpool and Ashford College in Middlesex, and at the age of 17 he went to work with his mother at Benhan & Son in London. Eventually this too would come to an end for them both, when they were let go in March of 1932 for bearing the name Hitler. By this time, William had re-established contact with his father in Germany and had visited him on numerous occasions since 1928. It was during his visit in 1929 that Alois took him to the Nazi Party's Nuremberg Congress, where

William pictured alongside his mother Bridget holding a copy of "The Hobo News", with the lead article denouncing his uncle

"WILLIAM WAS PROMPTLY SENT WANTING BACK TO ENGLAND BY HIS FATHER, WHO MADE IT EXTREMELY CLEAR THAT HIS LOYALTIES RESIDED WITH HIS POWERFUL BROTHER AND NOT TO HIS SON"

William would see the future Führer for the first time, followed by an in-person meeting a year later in 1930. The cordial Adolf provided William with an autographed picture during their meeting.

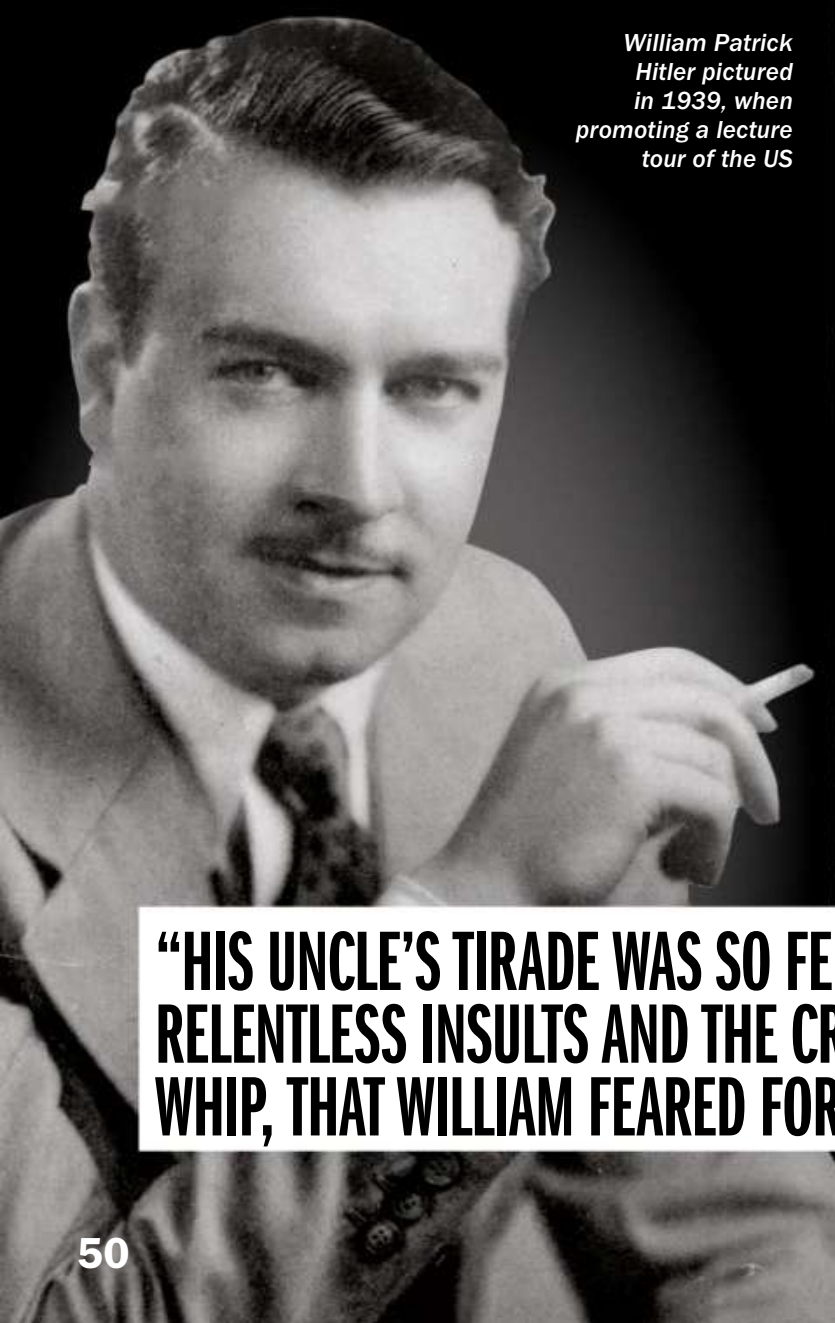
After a visit in 1931 to deal with the death of Geli Raubal (who was the daughter of Adolf's sister and rumoured to be pregnant with Adolf's child), William sought to capitalise on the Hitler name by producing numerous articles on his uncle, the Nazi Party and the Germany of the time. This did not sit well with Adolf, who was affronted at his portrayal in these articles and promptly summoned William back to Germany. Upon his arrival at Adolf's headquarters in Berlin, William found his uncle in a fit of rage over the matter, and was ordered to retract the stories.

His relationship with his uncle damaged, William returned to England only to be fired from his job in March 1932, again for his surname and association with the Nazi regime. This publicity backfired for him, as soon William was blackballed from working anywhere in England. Desperate for a means to earn money, William reached out to his father Alois, hoping he could perhaps use the relationship with his powerful uncle to secure a job in Germany. The situation would not go as William had intended. During his stay with his father in Berlin, William received a letter from t, where the Führer was in residence at the time. The message was damning for William, as Hitler disavowed any familial connection or knowledge of him in general, meaning any monetary assistance or employment would not be forthcoming. William was promptly sent back to England by his father, who made it extremely clear that his loyalties resided with his powerful brother and not to his son.

Faced with no ability to secure work in

William moved to the United States in February 1939

The Führer, shown here in 1931, threatened to jail William if he continued to flaunt his link with him



William Patrick Hitler pictured in 1939, when promoting a lecture tour of the US

"HIS UNCLE'S TIRADE WAS SO FEROCIOUS, WITH HIS RELENTLESS INSULTS AND THE CRACK OF HIS HORSEHIDE WHIP, THAT WILLIAM FEARED FOR HIS VERY LIFE"

England short of changing his surname, which he was not willing to do, William saw that his only course of action was to prove his relationship to Adolf and gain enough favour to be able secure a job from which to live on. After spending nearly an entire year gathering documents to do just that, which would include a copy of Adolf's birth certificate, William returned to Berlin in October 1933. By this time, his uncle had been appointed Reich chancellor by President Paul von Hindenburg.

In an effort to get permission to work in Germany, William provided all of this documentation to Adolf's chief of staff of the Sturmabteilung, or Storm Battalion, Ernst Röhm (who would later be executed on Adolf's orders on 1 July 1934). William's efforts would be rewarded and within a week's time he was summoned before Adolf, who was so cordial and affable towards his nephew that William felt his documents must have "softened his heart!" Soon William was allowed to work in Germany, with Rudolph Hess appointed as his 'handler' (a task Hess promptly designated to a subordinate referred to as Bowler). Adolf even provided William with 500 marks to hold him over until he could find employment.

By 1935, after a short stint working in a Berlin bank, William had secured approval from his uncle's regime to take up work at Opel Automotive, where he went from being a mechanic to an automobile salesman. However, within a year he would soon run afoul of his uncle again, and his work permit was suddenly cancelled. After months spent without work, William was eventually informed by two of Adolf's aides that if he continued telling others that he was Adolf's nephew to sell vehicles, he would be arrested and jailed. William vehemently denied all allegations of wrongdoing, and after months of being sidelined without work his permit was eventually renewed. By now it was obvious that his every move would be watched and scrutinised by the Führer.

The final break in the Hitlers' relationship came in 1936 when William was summoned before Adolf to account for some unnamed affront. His uncle's tirade was so ferocious, with his relentless insults and the crack of his horsehide whip, that William feared for his life. His last meeting with his father was not much better: Alois could not see his son gone soon enough and he made it clear that William was second tier to his uncle's wishes. William soon returned to England, but after being rejected for military service with British forces due to his connection with Adolf, he and his mother made for the United States in February 1939 aboard the SS Normandie.

Securing a work visa through his contract with the William Morris Theatrical Agency, William soon began lecture tours of America. He delivered speeches, discussions and talks around his infamous uncle, the Nazi Party and its key players, and the plight of the German people – to varying degrees of success.

It was not long after his arrival in the US that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) under J Edgar Hoover took an active interest in William and his mother, especially after his uncle's invasion of Poland in September 1939. This interest would only grow when William wrote to President Franklin D Roosevelt on 3 March 1942 asking for his direct intervention in allowing him to join the US armed forces. William in part stated: "For me today there could be no greater honour, Mr President, to have lived and to have been allowed to serve you, the deliverer of the American people from want, and no greater privilege than to have striven and had a small part in establishing the title you once will bear in posterity as the greatest Emancipator of suffering mankind in political history."

Hoover's FBI would question associates of both William and his mother and even conduct an in-person interview with him on 1 April 1942, finding no cause of concern in his sincerity to support the United States in its war against the Nazi regime. Though having been first denied entry into the US Army, William's appeal to the president and subsequent investigation by the FBI removed the remaining hurdles for induction into the armed forces of the United States. Finally, on 7 March 1944, the black-haired, blue-eyed, British-born William P Hitler was inducted into the US Navy in New York City.

William would go on to serve three years as a pharmacist's mate, earning a Purple Heart before his discharge in 1947. Upon his return to civilian life, in an effort to distance himself from the Hitler name William changed his surname to Stuart-Houston. He would go on to marry Phyllis Jean-Jacques and raise four children at their home on Long Island in New York, where he ran Brookhaven Laboratories. Interestingly, none of their four children would have families of their own and a kind of lore has arisen that this was due to a pact among William's children to end the Hitler bloodline (though no documentation or evidence has been discovered to date to substantiate this). William died on 14 July 1987 and was buried in Coram, New York, next to his mother Bridget. The released FBI report serves as a fitting epitaph to the curious story of the Hitlers who came to America.

Much can be said about William Patrick Stuart-Houston: that he was an opportunist who looked for the easy road and that once his powerful uncle shunned him he was forced to look for other avenues of financial gain. However, it can also be said that William was a patriot for the cause of freedom, who willingly strived against the odds to join in the fight against his tyrannical uncle. As with many families the Hitlers were complicated to say the least, but William forged his own path in his break from his dictatorial uncle and mean-spirited father in his quest to be "accepted by [his] friends and comrades" in the "great struggle for liberty" that was World War II."

***Above, far left:** Adolf Hitler with his niece and longtime lover Geli Raubal in the Bavarian mountains, 1929*

***Above, left:** Seaman First Class William Patrick Hitler receives his discharge from the US Navy from Commander Louis A Fey in Boston*

***Far left:** William is sworn into the US Navy by Lieutenant Christian Christofferson in New York City, 6 March 1944*

***Left:** William used his family connection in the US*

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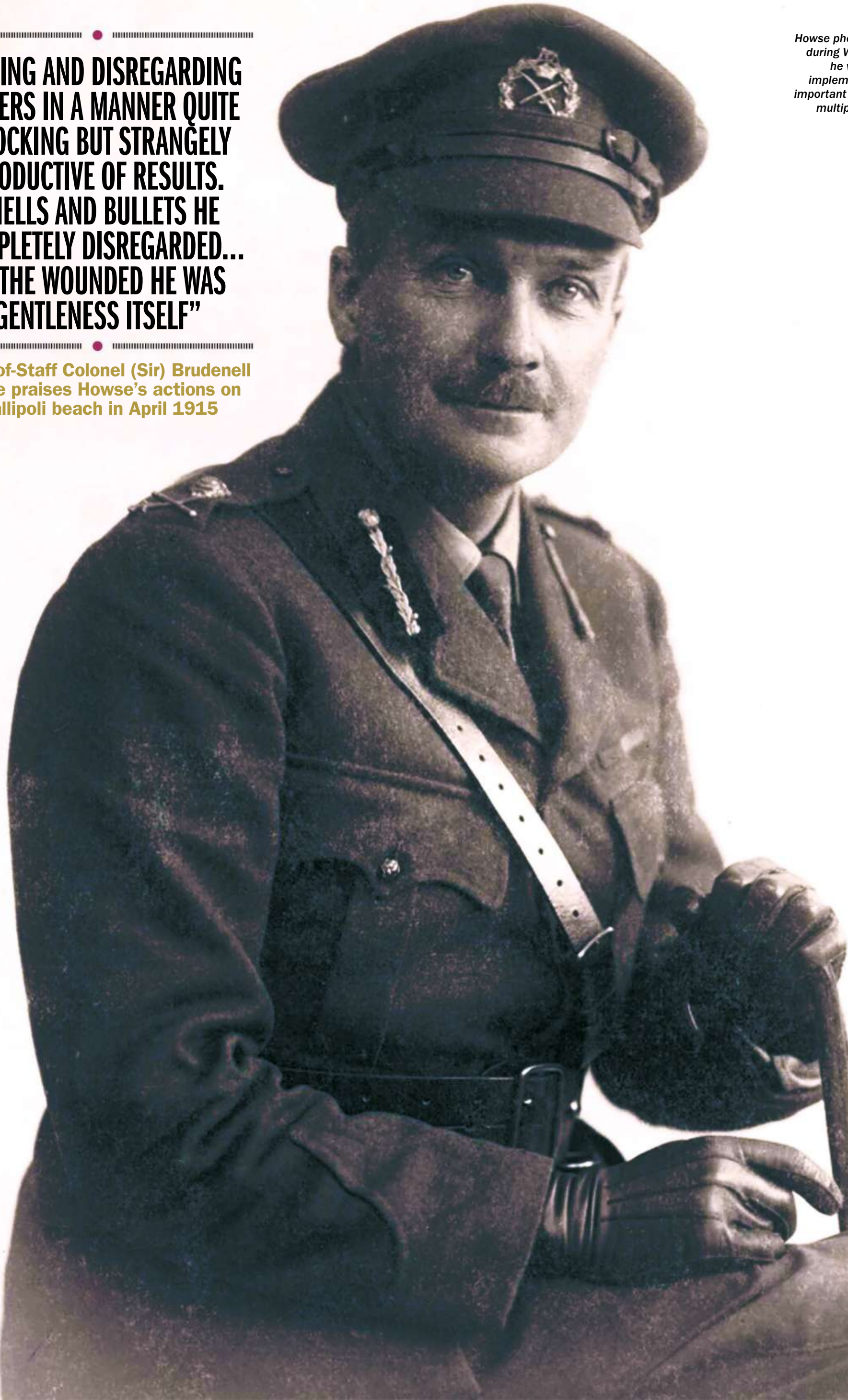
"GIVING AND DISREGARDING ORDERS IN A MANNER QUITE SHOCKING BUT STRANGELY PRODUCTIVE OF RESULTS. SHELLS AND BULLETS HE COMPLETELY DISREGARDED... TO THE WOUNDED HE WAS GENTLENESS ITSELF"

Chief-of-Staff Colonel (Sir) Brudenell White praises Howse's actions on Gallipoli beach in April 1915



Howse photographed during WWI, where he was able to implement several important changes in multiple theatres

NEVILLE HOWSE

During a fighting retreat at Vredefort, in the Orange Free State, this medical officer rescued a severely wounded man and carried him to safety, despite fierce enemy fire

WORDS **MURRAY DAHM**

The son of a Crimean war veteran and doctor, Neville Reginald Howse was born in Stogursey, Somerset, in 1863. Qualifying as a doctor in 1886, he migrated to Australia in 1889 for health reasons ('weak lungs') and set up his own medical practice in the New South Wales (NSW) city of Newcastle, then in the town of Taree. Deciding to become a surgeon, he returned to Britain to attend the Royal College and returned to Australia in 1899, setting up a practice in the central NSW town of Orange. When Britain declared war on the Boer Republics in October 1899, launching the Second Boer War, Howse volunteered for military service with the second contingent, New South Wales Army Medical Corps. Commissioned as a lieutenant, he departed for South Africa on 17 January, arriving in Capetown on 18 February. He contracted typhoid and was hospitalised for eight weeks.

In May, fighting near Doornkop, about 11km west of Johannesburg, a recovered Howse was mentioned in dispatches for his work treating casualties in the field. Two months later he was attached to a column of the 4th Brigade of Mounted Infantry commanded by General Ian Hamilton under Brigadier-General Charles Parker Ridley, chasing the formidable and most-eagerly sought Boer general, Christiaan de Wet.

De Wet had served as a field cornet in the First Boer War (fighting in the victory at the battle of Majuba Hill in 1881). In the Second Boer War he had participated in several of the Boer successes early in the war, participating first as a burgher without rank in the Heilbron Commando but rapidly gaining promotion to the highest commands. He participated in the Battle of Ladysmith at Nicholson's Nek in October 1899, which saw the surrender of 954 British men and officers. He then participated in the Siege of Ladysmith and was made General Piet Cronjé's second-in-command in December. When the British advance began in February 1900, De Wet's men raided and harassed the advance. De Wet was made commander-in-chief of the Free State Forces in March 1900 after the surrender of Cronjé at the Battle of Paardeberg on 27 February. Despite being continually hunted, De Wet continued to evade the British, mounting several successful raids and conducting copy-book guerrilla warfare. His men also annihilated several isolated British posts and mounted surprise attacks, such as on Sanna's Post near Blomfontein and at Reddersburg.

***Below:** Afrikaner soldiers were equipped with modern rifles in the Second Boer War, inflicting many casualties*

On the morning of 24 July 1900, at the small hamlet of Vredefort in the Orange Free State/Orange River Colony (Britain's name for the occupied territory), Ridley's column caught up with the rear of De Wet's. Rather than make their escape as was usual, De Wet's men turned and counter-attacked ferociously. Ridley's men were forced to withdraw due to the weight of fire coming from the Boers. The Boers pressed their attack and the British troops were forced to withdraw a second time. As the bugler rose to sound the retreat, he

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was shot in the stomach. Despite heavy enemy fire, Howse immediately mounted a horse and rode to the bugler's assistance. Dismounting to tend the man's injuries (he had been shot through the bladder), he dressed his wound. In the meantime, however, the horse was killed. Despite the intensifying cross-fire, Howse raised the man up and carried him on his back to safety behind the line of Ridley's men. There he immediately went to work to sew up the man's punctured bladder.

Despite the concerted efforts of British commanders to capture him, De Wet would continue to evade British forces until the end of the war. He eventually took part in the peace negotiations, standing in for indisposed Orange Free State President Marthinus Steyn, and was a signatory on the Treaty of Vereeniging on 31 May 1902, which ended the war.

Soon after his action at Vredefort, Howse was captured by the Boers but released as a non-combatant. He was promoted to captain in October, and then invalided to Britain in November 1900 due to ill-health (something which would plague for the rest of his career). He therefore did not return to Australia with his contingent which left South Africa in December 1900. After recovery in England, in February 1901 Howse travelled back to Australia. It was there that he learned of his Victoria Cross (VC) award (which was gazetted in June 1901 – the entry is brief indeed) even though his citation incorrectly names him House. He was

"ONE OF THE OUTSTANDING AUSTRALIANS OF THE GREAT WAR... ONE OF THE MOST REMARKABLE AND SELF-SACRIFICING MEDICAL ADMINISTRATORS ANY MILITARY FORCE HAS EVER KNOWN"

Fellow AAMC officer Colonel RM Downes

presented his medal in Sydney in December 1901 at Victoria Barracks, the first Australian to be awarded the VC (he remains the only Australian medical officer recipient). Present at the investiture were two recipients of the VC who had subsequently moved to NSW. Both men had been awarded the medal for their actions in the Indian Mutiny in 1857 – Alfred Heathcote and John Paton.

Howse returned to South Africa as major with the Australian Army Medical Corps (AAMC) in March 1902. By that time (as of January 1 1901) Australia had confederated as a nation so its troops now served under a national banner rather than being contingents from each colony as they had been in 1899 and 1900. Howse was co-commander of the Medical Corps with Major TA Green – Green in charge of the Field Hospital and Howse of the Bearer Company. They arrived in Durban and travelled by rail to Natal then on to Klerksdorp, Western Transvaal, where the field hospital was established. Howse and the Bearer Company were attached to Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry Column led by Colonel AW Thorneycroft of the Royal Scots Fusiliers. The unit had served with distinction throughout the war. Howse once again became seriously ill and was invalided to Britain once more on 6 July – the Australian forces left South Africa for home only two days later. He returned to Australia in November that year, one of only six Australian recipients of the VC in that conflict.

Howse married in 1905 and remained a major in the AAMC Reserve. He was elected mayor of Orange in 1914 but World War I cut short his term. In August that year, and despite being already over 50, he was appointed principal medical officer to the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force to German New Guinea, in particular the island of New Britain on 19 August as a lieutenant-colonel. Probably based on his own experiences, he personally organised the availability of drugs applicable

***Left:** Howse served with a mounted infantry column during the pursuit of General Christiaan de Wet*

to a tropical campaign and to protect against typhoid and smallpox.

He returned to Australia in time to sail with the first convoy of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) to Egypt. In December 1914 he was promoted colonel and made assistant director of medical services in the 1st Australian Division. At Gallipoli in late-April 1915 he personally organised the evacuation of the wounded from the crowded beach under enemy shell fire. He was mentioned in dispatches and appointed Companion of the Bath (CB) in July. He sought to combat venereal disease among the Australian troops and established the Anzac Medical Society to disseminate information among medical personnel.

He was made commander of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) medical services in September 1915 and then, in November, director of the AIF's medical services as surgeon-general. This ensured that the AAMC was independent from British medical authority and the Royal Army Medical Corps. When the AIF moved to western Europe in 1916, Howse set up his administrative HQ in London but visited the front frequently and maintained control over the AAMC in Egypt, Palestine and France.

In January 1917 he was promoted major-general and appointed Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath (KCB). He introduced surgical and resuscitation teams with each division, and reorganised field ambulances into two sections (an idea rejected in 1916 but adopted in 1918).

English soldiers pictured upon their return from fighting in the Second Boer War, c.1900

***Above:** Afrikaners pictured during the Second Boer War. Howse served with distinction in the New South Wales Army Medical Corps during the conflict*

***Below:** Howse in the 1920s during his successful (if brief) political career when, using his vast experience, he served as both Minister for Defence and Health*

As the war drew to a close, Howse advised the Australian government on the return of severely wounded soldiers and medical repatriation.

He was appointed Knight Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George (KCMG), and made a Knight of the Order of St John of Jerusalem in 1919. Howse returned to Australia in January 1920, where spoke out on the successes of the AAMC in making and keeping the AIF healthy. He was again elected mayor of Orange, in 1921, but once more only served for a short term. He resigned his army commission in November 1922 to become a Member of Parliament. As an MP, he attended the fourth assembly of the League of Nations in 1923. He then served in the government of Prime Minister Stanley Bruce as Minister for Defence and Health and other ministries between 1925 and 1929. He was ahead of his time, seeking to improve public health and promoting maternity allowances and the welfare of returned servicemen. He was a pioneer in the treatment of venereal disease and cancer, setting up one of the world's first radium banks in Australia in 1928. He lost his seat in the 1929 election and travelled to England for cancer treatment in February 1930 but died in London in September that year.

For the centenary of his bravery, he was depicted on a one dollar coin and a postage stamp in Australia, and a sculpture was commissioned for the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, an institution he founded in 1927.

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ALVIS FV603 SARACEN

ARMOURED PERSONNEL CARRIER

The Saracen provided protection from small arms fire and shrapnel for eight soldiers, the troop commander, plus the two-man crew

WORDS **CRAIG MOORE**

VENTILATION
On the right-hand side of the Saracen there were two armoured air vents used by the internal ventilation system. Duction inside the Saracen carried cool air to the driver and commander and also to the troops in the back.

OFF-ROAD
Six large wheels enabled the Saracen to scale vertical rises up to 1ft 6in (46cm) and span gaps of 5ft (1.52m). The front four wheels were used for steering, and it could keep going if one of them was damaged.

A British Army FV603 Saracen on patrol in Belfast, February 1972

© Getty

ALVIS FV603 SARACEN
ARMOURED PERSONNEL CARRIER

PRODUCTION	FROM 1952
ORIGIN	UK
LENGTH	4.8M (15FT 8IN)
MAX SPEED	72KM/H (45MPH)
RANGE	400KM (249 MILES)
ENGINE	ROLLS-ROYCE B80 MK.3A OR MK.6A 8-CYL INLET OVER EXHAUST 160HP PETROL ENGINE
CREW	2 MEN (COMMANDER/ GUNNER, DRIVER) + UP TO 9 TROOPS
MAX ARMOUR	16MM
PRIMARY WEAPON	BROWNING M1919 MACHINE GUN

The Alvis FV603 Saracen 6x6 armoured personnel carrier (APC) was produced between 1951 to 1971. In World War II the British Army had realised that it needed APCs to enable the infantry to keep up with the tanks during an attack in a combined arms operation. Although the German Panzer Grenadiers had been using APCs since the beginning of the war, Commonwealth forces first used them during Operation Totalize, 8 August 1944. The Saracen first entered British Army service in 1952 and met the APC needs of the British Army during the early part of the Cold War. Each vehicle was assigned a driver and a commander/ machine gunner, and could carry a squad of eight soldiers plus a troop commander. The FV603 Saracen shared a similar chassis with the FV601 Saladin 6x6 armoured car, FV622 Stalwart amphibious military cargo truck and the Salamander airfield crash tender. This helped with supplying spare parts. The rear of the Saracen could accommodate stretchers, and two armoured ambulance versions were produced: the FV606 and the FV611. The FV604 ACV was an Armoured Command Vehicle version of the Saracen, while the FV610 ACP was the Royal Artillery's Saracen-based Armoured Command Post vehicle.

DE-BUSING

Unlike Soviet APCs, the rear doors on the back of the Saracen were large. This helped the eight infantry soldiers and their NCO to get out quickly. The doors opened sideways, providing some protection from small arms fire.

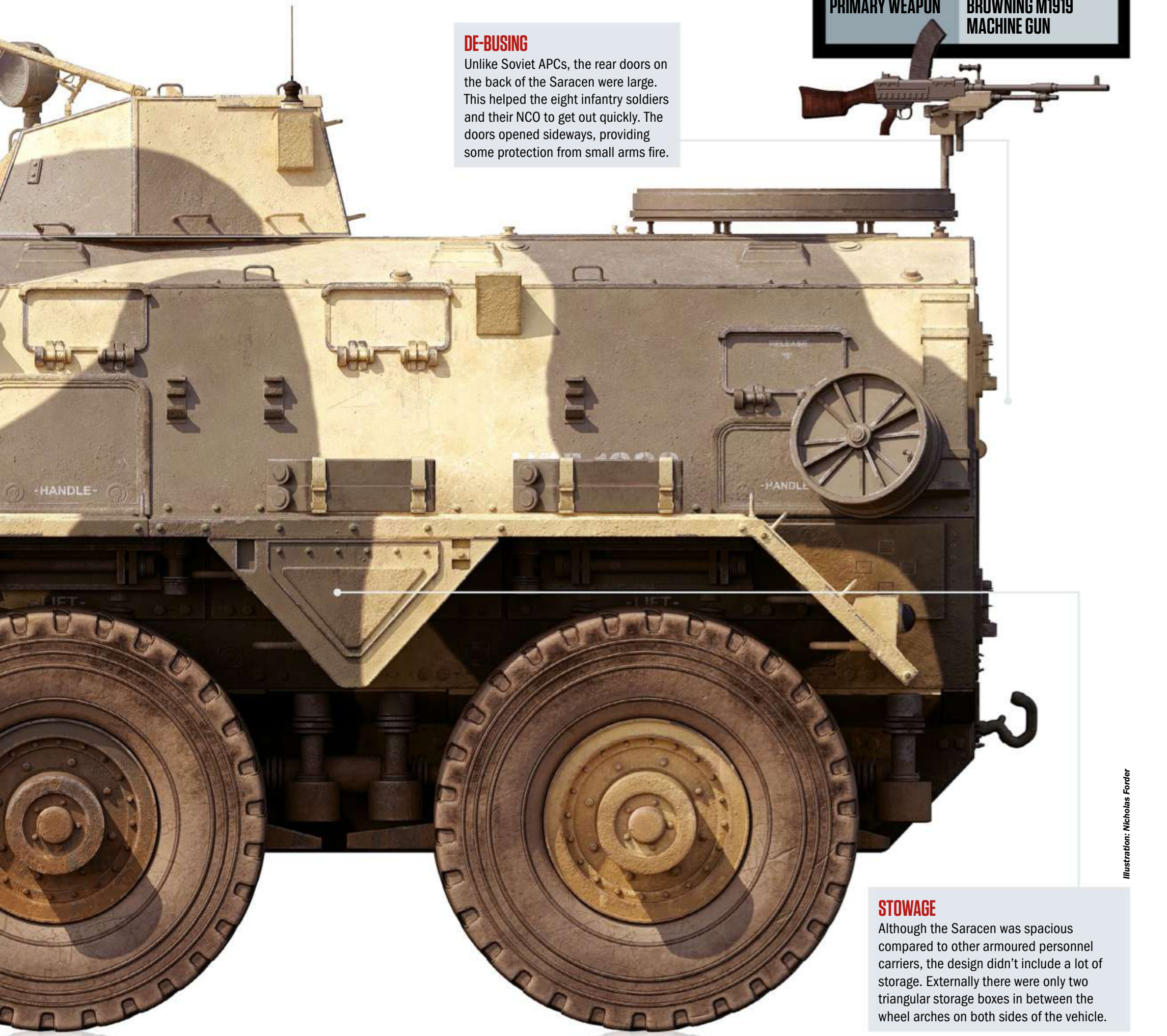


Illustration: Nicholas Forder

STOWAGE

Although the Saracen was spacious compared to other armoured personnel carriers, the design didn't include a lot of storage. Externally there were only two triangular storage boxes in between the wheel arches on both sides of the vehicle.

For self-defence the turret was fitted with a Browning .30 M1919 machine-gun or an L37 GPMG. The driver had a wide hatch at the front

This rectangular hatch inside the Saracen gave access to a Bren light machine gun that was fixed to the roof

ARMAMENT

The turret was fitted with a Browning .30 M1919 machine gun or an L37 GPMG. Behind the turret a .303 Bren light machine gun could be attached to the large ring mount that was fixed to the roof. This weapon could be accessed via a hatch in the middle of the ring mount. Troops in the back could fire their own weapons out of the hatches on the side and rear of the vehicle. Six, or sometimes 12, smoke grenade launchers were attached to the front of the vehicle.

***Above:** Six smoke grenade launchers were attached to the front of the Saracen and could be fired to cover a retreat*

British soldiers in riot gear, supported by Saracens, on the Lower Falls Road in Belfast, September 1976

DESIGN

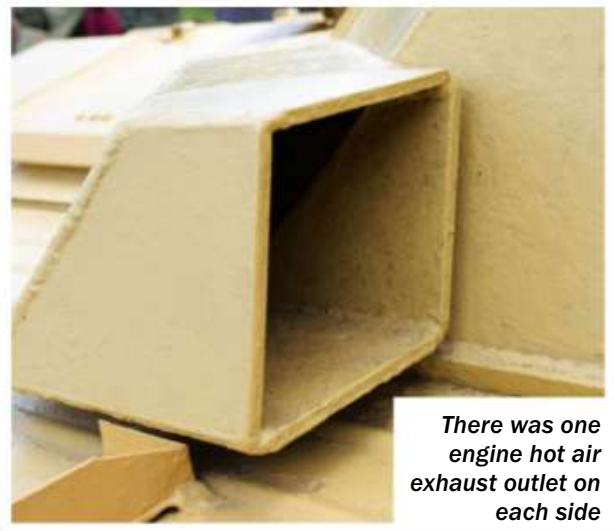
It had permanent six-wheel drive, with independent parallel wishbone links and torsion bar suspension on each wheel station. It was 4.8m (15ft 9in) long, 2.54m (8ft 4in) wide and 2.46m (8ft 1in) tall, and weighed 10 tonnes. The Saracen's maximum armour thickness was 16mm, which was enough to protect the occupants from small arms fire and high-explosive shell shrapnel. By placing a cover over the bottom section of the radiator grill the Saracen could wade through water up to 1.06m (3ft 6in) deep.

"THE SARACEN COULD WADE THROUGH WATER UP TO 1.06M (3FT 6IN) DEEP"

There were three hatches along the side of the Saracen so the soldiers could fire their weapons from inside the vehicle

ENGINE

The Saracen was powered by a Rolls-Royce B80 Mk.3A or Mk.6A, eight-cylinder, 160hp petrol engine. The Rolls-Royce B range of petrol engines were developed to power British military vehicles. They were all of the inline configuration, with crossflow inlet-over-exhaust cylinder heads and were naturally aspirated. The use of interchangeable parts with other engines was part of the design process to make the logistical supply chain easier. Air and oil filters were washable. The Saracen had a maximum road speed of 72km/h (45mph).



There was one engine hot air exhaust outlet on each side

The Saracen APC was powered by a Rolls-Royce B80 Mk.3A or Mk.6A eight-cylinder inlet over exhaust 160hp petrol engine

All images © Craig Moore / Getty

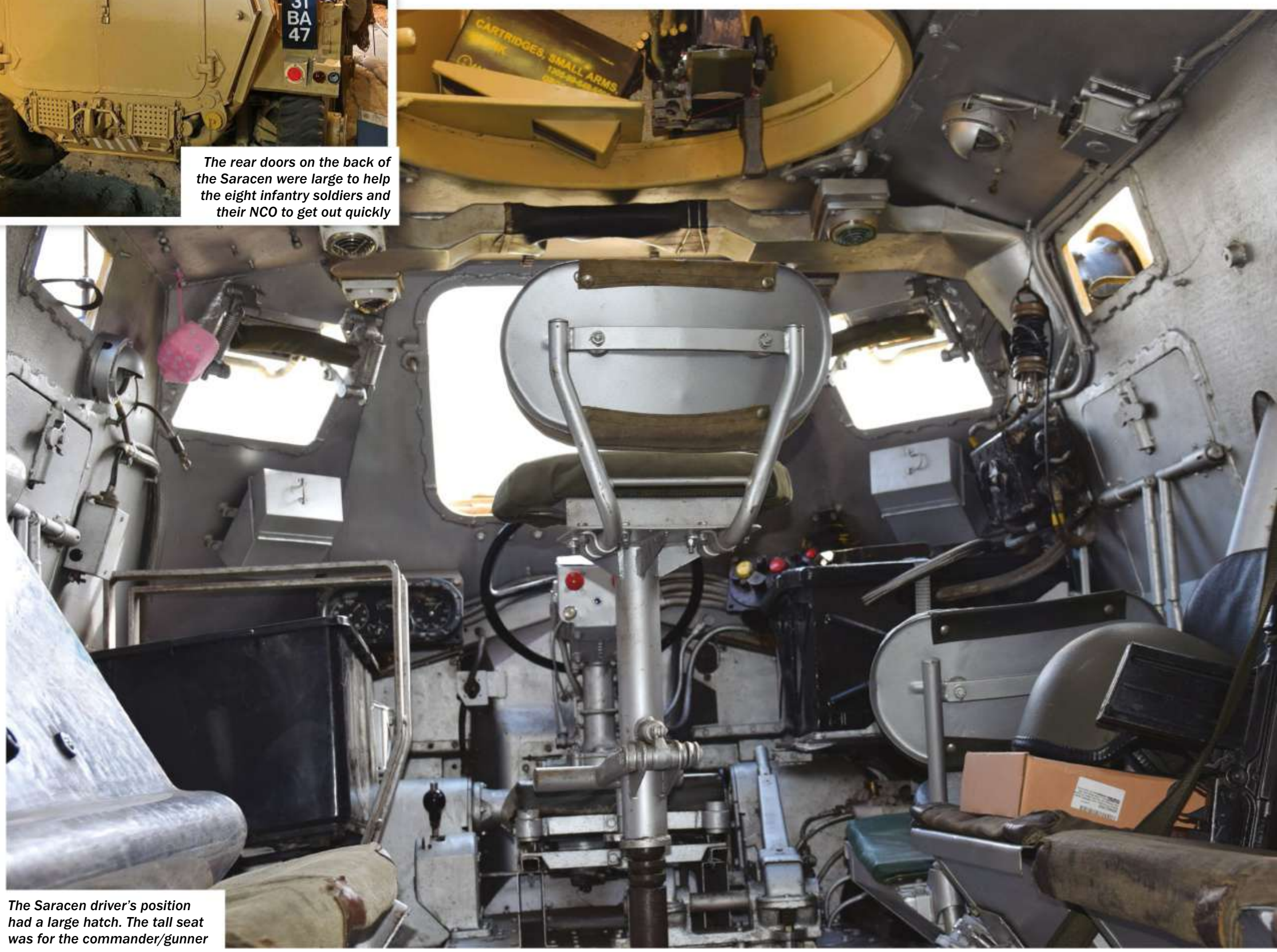
CREW COMPARTMENT

Unusually for a British military vehicle the driver sat in the centre of the APC and not on the right. Because of the angle of the sloping armour of the glacis plate, the large steering wheel was angled away from the driver at the bottom to give him more leg room. The commander/gunner sat immediately behind him in an adjustable chair. He could raise the chair so that he could sit with his shoulders and head out of the turret when the hatch was open.

There were four seats either side of the rear walls of the Saracen, enabling eight soldiers to be carried or two stretchers

The Saracen commander/gunner sat behind the driver in an adjustable seat that enabled him operate the turret machine gun

The rear doors on the back of the Saracen were large to help the eight infantry soldiers and their NCO to get out quickly



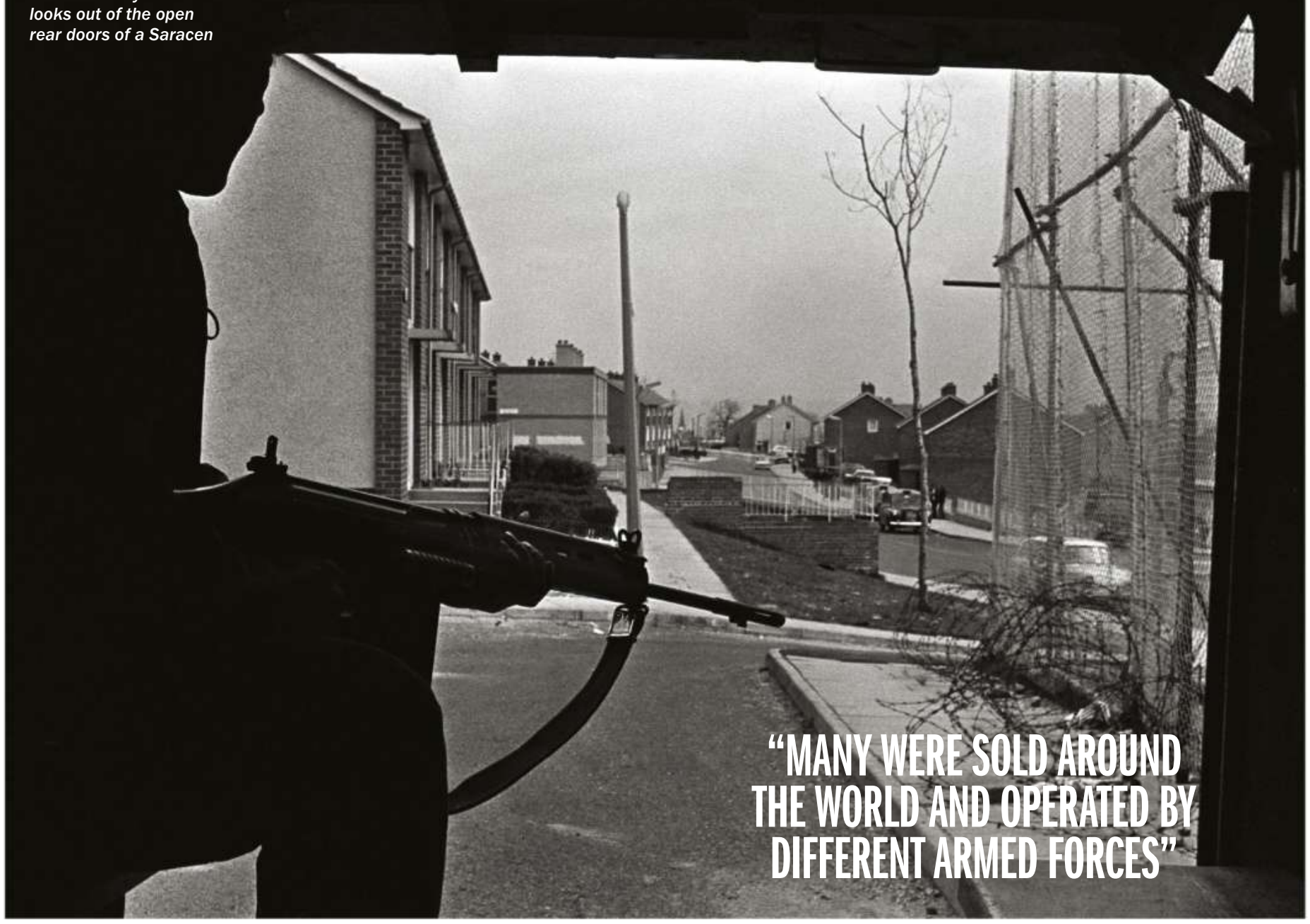
The Saracen driver's position had a large hatch. The tall seat was for the commander/gunner

An FV603 in Belfast, pictured from a British Army observation post, April 1972

SERVICE HISTORY

Most photographs of FV603 Saracens show them painted green being used in service in Germany with the British Army of the Rhine during the Cold War. They were also painted green when used in Northern Ireland during the early years of 'The Troubles,' patrolling the streets of Belfast. During the 1970s and 1980s, Saracens were painted blue and used in a policing role in Hong Kong. Saracens were painted in a 'Light Stone' sandy yellow colour when the British Army used them during the Aden Emergency (1963-67) and on British Army bases in the Mediterranean such as in Libya, Malta and Cyprus. Many were sold around the world and operated by different armed forces.

A British Army soldier looks out of the open rear doors of a Saracen



"MANY WERE SOLD AROUND THE WORLD AND OPERATED BY DIFFERENT ARMED FORCES"

All images © Craig Moore / Getty

HOW EDINBURGH CASTLE DEFIED THE JACOBITE REBELLION

During the rebellion of 1745, Jacobite forces took control of Edinburgh – but the city's iconic castle would not surrender

WORDS **REBECCA FORD**

On 15 September 1745, the sound of bells echoed throughout the city of Edinburgh. They clanged a warning; the Jacobite army of Charles Edward Stuart, 'Bonnie Prince Charlie', was on its way south. People rushed into the streets in panic, for the city, with the exception of the castle, was ill prepared for battle. Efforts were made to improve its defences and arms were handed out to enthusiastic volunteers. But when a letter from Prince Charles arrived the next day warning citizens that he was determined to enter the city – and could not answer for the consequences if anyone opposed him – many urged capitulation. Rumours spread – one said that 16,000 Highlanders were going to take the city – and the volunteers lost their courage and marched swiftly back up the hill to the castle to hand back their weapons. In the early hours of the morning of 17 September, Charles – who was encamped nearby – sent a party to break into the city. It proved easier than expected; a gate at the Netherbow Port was opened by mistake, so the Jacobites rushed in and went on to seize the guardhouse in the High Street, followed by the guard posts on the walls. By midday, the sound of bagpipes filled the air and the Highlanders were in control of the Scottish capital. Well, most of it, as a flag of defiance still flew from the castle – and the commander inside refused to surrender.

Early Settlement

Perched high on the tip of a volcano that became extinct some 70 million years ago, Edinburgh Castle is an enduring symbol both of the city and of Scotland itself. It has functioned as palace and prison, fortress and refuge, royal residence and republican garrison, and its strategic position – with commanding views over the city and surrounding countryside – has made it highly prized as a symbol of military might and political power.

The castle rock was first occupied by Bronze Age settlers around 850 BCE and then as an Iron Age hill fort in the 1st century. In 600, the crag was occupied by the army of Gododdin, who called it Din Eidyn, before it was seized by the Angles, who changed its name to Edinburgh. These early fortifications did not survive, but we do know that by the 11th century, a structure of some substance stood on the rock.

The castle became home to King Malcolm III of Scotland and his second wife, Margaret, the great niece of Edward the Confessor. A devout Catholic, Margaret, who was later canonised, died at the castle in 1093. She is remembered there in its oldest surviving building, Saint Margaret's Chapel, an exquisitely simple structure that was probably constructed as a memorial by her son David I circa 1130.

Battles Royal

By the Middle Ages, the castle had been heavily fortified and had changed hands several times. Held by the English for 12 years from 1174, it was captured by Edward I (the 'hammer of the Scots') in 1296 – Edward stripped the castle of many of its treasures, including jewels and relics. In 1314, the Earl of Moray, who seized it after a daring climb of the rock face, retook it for the Scots. This struggle for the castle continued over the centuries and it was besieged many times, most notably during the 'Lang Siege', which lasted from 1571-73. Mary, Queen of Scots had given birth to James VI in the castle just a few years earlier. Though she had been forced to abdicate in his favour and had fled

***Above:** The Jacobite front line charges at the Battle of Prestonpans,September 21st 1745*

to captivity in England, the governor of the castle supported her claim to the throne. He doggedly held out against the forces of the regent James Douglas, earl of Morton who eventually attacked the castle with backup from English forces. Much of the castle was destroyed, and it was rebuilt by the victorious regent, who strengthened its defences with structures including the Half Moon Battery.

Although by now it had ceased to be a royal residence, with the nearby Palace of Holyroodhouse offering greater comforts, the castle was still utilised by royal visitors. In 1617, James VI (now also James I of England) used the castle to hold his jubilee celebrations and in 1633, his son Charles I spent the night before his Scottish coronation there (he had been crowned previously in England). The crowns of Scotland and England were now, of course, united and there was Scottish resentment at this Stuart monarch's execution in 1649. His son was proclaimed Charles II in Edinburgh, an act that infuriated Oliver Cromwell, who retaliated by invading Scotland in 1650 and besieging the castle for three months before it surrendered. The great hall, built in the early 16th century, was converted into barracks. Despite this republican presence, the Scots continued to show allegiance to the Stuart monarchs and, in 1651, Charles II was crowned king at Scone Palace in Perthshire – long before he was restored to the throne in England.

The first Jacobite rising

A peace descended on Edinburgh Castle but it was not to last – and once again the cause of the conflict was the Stuart succession. English Protestants had invited Mary, Charles II's Protestant niece, to take the throne along with her husband, William of Orange – in favour of her father, the Catholic James VII/II who had fled to France. Mary accepted and arrived in 1689. After some consideration, the Scottish parliament in Edinburgh agreed to support William and Mary as monarchs, but many of the Scottish people continued to support the Jacobite claim to the throne. The governor of the castle, the duke of Gordon was one. He had been appointed by King James and was determined to support his cause. Although he had a garrison of about 120 men and little ammunition, Gordon refused to surrender. It's said he even ignored a verbal message from James urging him to leave the castle and head north. Gordon declared himself "…resolved to defend it to the last extremity." On 18 March, guards were placed around the castle but failed to storm it. The siege began.

There was a symbolic value in the possession of the castle for the Jacobites – the Earl of Tyrconnell in Ireland sent a message saying they he would relieve the castle with 20,000 men if Gordon could hold out for six weeks. On 16 April 1689, John Graham of Claverhouse, 1st viscount Dundee, raised James II's standard on a hilltop in Dundee, an act that signalled the start of the first Jacobite rising. Government forces blockaded the castle, hoping to starve out the troops inside. Some say the garrison managed to keep up communications with its friends in the city by exchanging signals with Anne Smith, granddaughter of the bishop of Galloway, who had a conveniently placed window in her home. The castle was regularly bombarded– one cannonade reducing morale by damaging a cask containing the garrison's ale. Gordon refrained from returning fire, although some reports state that a small shot from the castle, "…killed one woman, two men, two horses and a dog."

The siege lasted throughout April and May and into June, by which time conditions inside had deteriorated considerably: the water supply ran low, troops were sick (15 skeletons found buried in the castle are thought to be those of besieged garrison soldiers), food was running out and there was little ammunition. Events outside were changing rapidly and although Viscount Dundee was successfully rallying troops to support the Jacobite cause, the government had charged General Hugh Mackay with leading a large opposition to quell the rebellion. Gordon received signal that there was no chance of relief. On 14 June he surrendered the badly damaged castle and the exhausted garrison marched out. It was the last time it was to be held for the Jacobite cause.

The assault of 1715

Although the Jacobites successfully beat Mackay's forces at the Battle of Killiecrankie, Viscount Dundee was killed. In 1690, William of Orange defeated James VII/II's troops at the Battle of the Boyne in Ireland and it seemed that the cause was lost. However, in 1715 there was another Jacobite rising and the castle was once again to become the focus of attention – a potent symbol of power for those who laid claim to the throne.

The arrival of a new monarch, George I, the ruler of Hanover, stirred Jacobite sentiments – particularly in Scotland where many were already unhappy about the establishment of a political union with England in 1707. Although James II had died, his son James Francis Edward Stuart ('the Old Pretender' sometimes referred to as James VIII/III) was living in exile. In 1715, the Earl of Mar successfully rallied the clans at Braemar to support the Stuart claim to the throne. Possession of Edinburgh Castle would have given an enormous symbolic, as well as strategic, boost to the movement. There was a financial incentive too, for a large stock of gold was held within its walls. Lord Drummond, son of the Duke of Perth, determined to seize this prize, summoned men to help him – a band of Highlanders and a number of Edinburgh Jacobites. The castle garrison was weak and possibly sympathetic – and at least one former prisoner thought the best way to take it would be to encourage the porter to leave the main gate unlocked and gain entry that way.

Edinburgh Castle stands in pride of place atop an extinct volcano

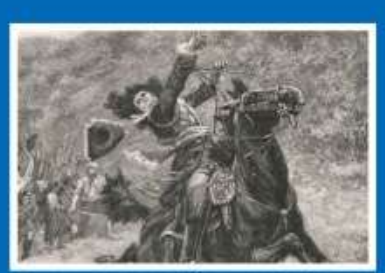
c.1800 THEN & NOW

The main entrance to the castle, which will greet most visitors

SCOTLAND'S SITES OF REBELLION

KILLIECRANKIE

The beautiful Pass of Killiecrankie is a wooded gorge on the River Garry in Perthshire. It was the site of the first major battle of the Jacobite Risings, which took place on 27 July 1689 between government forces led by General Hugh Mackay and a large Jacobite army led by Viscount Dundee ('Bonnie Dundee') who was killed in the battle.



GLENFINNAN

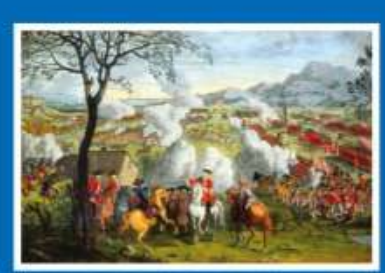
It was here, on 19 August 1745, that Charles Edward Stuart raised his standard signalling the start of the last Jacobite Rising. The Glenfinnan Monument commemorates this event. Erected in 1815 at the head of Loch Shiel, the 18-metre column is topped with the figure of a lone kilted Highlander. Visit nts.org.uk/Property/Glenfinnan-Monument/ for more.

SKYE

With bruised pride, Bonnie Prince Charlie sailed to Skye shortly after his defeat at Culloden. Visit Portree, the island's main town, where he bid farewell to Flora MacDonald in MacNab's Inn (which is now the Royal Hotel) and left to live the rest of his life in exile. Skye is surrounded by beautiful parks and wildlife and offers perfect hiking locations.

CULLODEN

This was the site of the battle where, on 16 April 1746, the Jacobite Rising of 1745 was ruthlessly crushed by government forces led by the Duke of Cumberland. After this defeat, the Highland way of life effectively ended forever. The battlefield has been restored as closely as possible to how it would have been during the battle. A visitor centre tells its story.



TRAQUAIR HOUSE

This fascinating house on the Scottish border dates back to 1107. The family who lived here were staunch Jacobites, and after Bonnie Prince Charlie visited in 1745, the great Bear Gates were closed – the family swearing never to open them again until a Stuart monarch was back on the throne. You can visit the house today – head to traquair.co.uk for more information.

WHAT TO SEE AT THE CASTLE

MANY REMARKABLE SIGHTS AWAIT VISITORS TO EDINBURGH CASTLE TODAY – HERE ARE JUST A FEW OF THE HIGHLIGHTS

MONS MEG

This is one of only two surviving bombard guns gifted to James II in 1457. The name refers to Mons in modern-day Belgium, where they were made.

SAINT MARGARET'S CHAPEL

This chapel is the oldest remaining part of the castle. It was built in 1130 by King David I, to commemorate the death of his mother, Queen Margaret. The chapel was also used as a gunpowder store in the 16th century. It features an original decorated chancel arch.

SCOTTISH NATIONAL WAR MEMORIAL

Built in remembrance of Scotland's fallen of World War I, this memorial building was designed by Sir Robert Lorimer in 1919, with a shrine and hall of honour.

THE NATIONAL WAR MUSEUM

Edinburgh Castle is a fitting home for Scotland's museum dedicated to war. Within the building, you'll discover the stories of Scotland's military past, through artefacts and exhibits including personal items owned by soldiers.

ROYAL SCOTS MUSEUM

This museum is entirely free to enter and is dependent upon the donations of visitors. It displays exhibits and information about the Royal Scots, the oldest infantry regiment of the line of the British Army.

ROYAL PALACE

This area of the castle has seen some of the most historically significant happenings, with Mary, Queen of Scots giving birth to James VI here in 1566.

William of Orange leading his army to victory over James II in the Battle of Boyne in July 1690

However, this suggesion was rejected in favour of a more flamboyant plan, which was to be led by Doctor William Arthur, professor of botany, and his brother Thomas, who had served as an ensign at the castle. They bribed the sentries on the inside to let down a line to which a rope ladder could be fixed; the party would then ascend and take the castle. Lord Drummond had the rope ladder specially made: it came in two sections and was wide enough to allow several men to climb at once. If the assault was successful, the rebels were to inform the Earl of Mar by lighting a chain of beacons and firing the castle's guns. The raid was to take place on 8 August at 11pm, an hour before the sentries made their round. Some of the conspirators assembled in an Edinburgh tavern early in the evening to finalise arrangements; reports afterwards claimed one was disguised with a beard and red coat; another – rather improbably – was wearing a nightgown. The rest of the party were dotted about the city, drinking in various taverns and raucously toasting their success – so much so that they were overheard.

The plan was that the rebels should rendezvous beside Saint Cuthbert's church at the foot of the castle rock between 9pm and 10pm. However, some stayed in the taverns drinking to, "…good news from the castle". The rope ladder, which should have been collected earlier in the evening, was still receiving final adjustments and the 11pm deadline was missed. Although the ladder eventually appeared, the sentries became nervous and instead of hauling it up and fixing it into place, dropped it back over the wall – then fired on the Jacobites, who fled. The plot had failed, and an informer (possibly a sharp-eared innkeeper) had forewarned the authorities. However, only four rebels were captured and only one was hanged for his part in the plot; Doctor Arthur escaped and continued to fight for the Jacobite cause. Lieutenant-Colonel James Steuart, deputy governor of the castle, was suspected of being a Jacobite sympathiser and dismissed from his post for failing to act on the intelligence received – although some sources suggest he probably did, reluctantly, save the castle for the king. Although the plot had failed, it had come uncomfortably close. Should the Earl of Mar have gained Edinburgh Castle, he would doubtless have brought his troops to the capital and greatly increased James's chances of taking the throne. As it was, in November 1715, after Mar's forces clashed with the Duke of Argyll's government army at the battle of Sherrifmuir, Mar failed to capitalise on his perceived victory and, rather than marching south, merely withdrew.

The castle in 1745

The last great defence of Edinburgh castle was during the Jacobite Rising of 1745. Relations between Britain and France had deteriorated throughout 1744 and plans were made for the French to invade southern England using Charles Edward Stuart (James VIII/III's son, often called the 'Young Pretender') as their figurehead. Although it was called off, Charles was unwilling to give up on the adventure and, in July 1745, landed on the Isle of Eriskay in the Outer Hebrides hoping to rally the clans to his cause. A combination of charisma, promises of French aid and a commitment to abolish the union with England allowed him to gather enough support. So on 19 August 1745, Charles raised his father's standard at Glenfinnan in front of about 1,200 men.

Making good use of the military roads that were constructed for the government by General Wade, the Jacobite forces moved south swiftly and took the city of Edinburgh on 17 September. Charles left the castle well alone at first and made a triumphal entry into the Palace of Holyroodhouse. Spectators at the palace all flocked to see this tall, regal figure dressed in a tartan coat, a blue and gold sash and boots. Perched on his head was a blue velvet bonnet adorned with a white cockade. Charles remained in the city for three more days, allowing his troops to rest, before marching south to Prestonpans where he comprehensively defeated Sir John Cope's government forces.

***Above, left:** The Scottish crown jewels, on display at Edinburgh Castle*

***Above, right:** This painting by John Pettie, called Disbanded, shows a Highlander after the battle of Culloden*

Charles returned to the capital but the castle, under the control of General Guest along with General Preston, continued to hold out. Some reports suggest that Guest refused a bribe to surrender the fortress, while others suggest that he was sympathetic to the Jacobite cause and was only persuaded to resist by Preston, a staunch Hanoverian. Whatever the truth, there was initially a prudent truce, for the castle's defences had been improved a few years before and Charles knew he was unlikely to take it by force. The Highlanders guarded the approach to the castle but allowed provisions to enter on the tacit understanding that they were not attacked.

The truce ended on 29 September when the garrison was deemed to have fired from the castle. A blockade was instituted, but General Guest, aware of his strategic advantage, sent a letter to the Edinburgh authorities demanding that provisioning resume or he would bombard the city. The people appealed to Charles, who wrote back threatening reprisals on the estates of all those in the castle. Another truce was agreed, but swiftly broken when the Jacobites fired on people delivering goods to the castle. The garrison retaliated and, at midday on 4 October, General Preston warned townspeople living close to the castle that they should flee their homes. Many did so.

The bombardment began and increased in severity throughout the day, raining cannon balls down on the city.

"AT MIDDAY ON 4 OCTOBER, GENERAL PRESTON WARNED TOWNSPEOPLE LIVING CLOSE TO THE CASTLE THAT THEY SHOULD FLEE THEIR HOMES. MANY DID SO"

The north east view of Edinburgh Castle as depicted by John Slezer

TOWARDS THE '45 REBELLION'

WHAT WERE THE DECIDING FACTORS THAT LED TO EDINBURGH CASTLE COMING UNDER SIEGE IN 1745?

The Jacobite Rebellion that would come in 1745 was the culmination of decades of disagreement about who should succeed the throne. The Jacobites, who took their name from Jacobus, the Latin for James, enthusiastically supported the Stuart succession to the thrones of Scotland and England, which had been united in 1603 when James VI of Scotland ascended the English throne as James I. After the Stuart monarch Charles II died without any legitimate children, his younger brother James succeeded as James VII/II.

However, while Charles had married a Catholic, he had been careful to establish his Protestant credentials and even arranged his niece Mary's marriage to the Protestant prince, William of Orange. James was less politically astute and not only married a Catholic but converted to Catholicism himself. When his wife gave birth to a boy, James Francis Edward Stuart, fears were raised that a Catholic dynasty was to be established. William of Orange landed an army in England and James fled to France; he was deposed as monarch and the crown was passed to William and Mary.

Over the years, the Jacobite movement became entangled within a host of issues, both religious and political. It is frequently portrayed as a solely Scottish cause, but there were many English, French and Irish Jacobites, while many Scots – particularly Lowlanders - supported the status quo. There were five risings all together, the first in 1689 after William and Mary ascended the throne. Although the Jacobites defeated government forces at the Battle of Killiecrankie, expeditions were mounted to subdue the Highlands, and in January 1692 they surrendered to the government. However after the massacre at Glencoe just weeks later, relations were soured.

In 1708, James VII/II's son, the exiled James Francis Edward Stuart – who had been proclaimed James VIII/III by his followers – made an attempt to invade and claim the throne. He set sail from Dunkirk with a French fleet and tried to land in the Firth of Forth. However, his attempt was thwarted by the Royal Navy and he sailed back to France.

There was a major uprising in 1715, after the British crown passed to Queen Anne's nearest Protestant relative – her third cousin, Prince George of Hanover. The accession of George I revived hopes for the restoration of the Stuart monarchs – still regarded by many as the rightful heirs. A 10,000-strong Jacobite army fought government troops commanded by the Duke of Argyll, chief of the clan Campbell, at the Battle of Sherrifmuir. They failed to capitalise on their victory and James VIII/III did not arrive in Scotland until after the battle. When he fled back to France early in 1716, the rising was over.

In 1719, a Jacobite force, supported by Spanish frigates, landed in Scotland and held Eilean Donan Castle for a short time. However, they found little local support and the rising was soon quashed.

The famous 1745 'lost portrait' of Bonnie Prince Charles

When it grew dark, a party left the castle, dug a trench and planted more cannon across Castlehill. They also set fire to several deserted houses and traumatised the townspeople.

The Highlanders, skilled in hand-to-hand combat but lacking heavy artillery, were no match for such an assault – and nor could Charles risk alienating the citizens of Edinburgh, as without their support his cause was doomed. He needed to march south into England if he wished his mission to be successful and had no time for a prolonged siege – so he made a virtue of a necessity and issued a proclamation lifting the blockade. In it, he expressed his regret, "…that we are hourly informed of the many murders which are committed upon the innocent inhabitants of this city, by the inhuman commanders and garrison of the castle of Edinburgh." Instead of taking reprisals against the castle's commanders he declared it would not be, "…derogatory to the glory of a prince to suspend punishment… when thereby the lives of innocent men can be saved."

Charles remained in the capital for several more weeks and amassed an army of 5,000-6,000 men; the castle, however, remained a government stronghold. At the end of October, the Jacobites left Edinburgh to march into England hoping to gather more support once over the border. But although they made rapid progress, they left Scotland unsecured and government forces easily retook control of much of the country. Support from English Jacobites failed to materialise and although they got as far as Derby, Charles was eventually persuaded that assault on London would be disastrous and his army marched back to Scotland. Bonnie Prince Charlie never returned to Edinburgh, and in April 1746, his forces were brutally defeated at Culloden. The standards that the Highlanders had carried were removed from the battlefield and taken to Edinburgh Castle, where they were exhibited as spoils of war. The Jacobite Risings were over.

***Top:** The Battle of Culloden, 1746 was the last full-scale British battle to attempt to place a Stuart on the throne*

***Above:** Edinburgh Castle, in an illustration dating from the 16th century*

***Above:** The Earl of Mar successfully rallied clans to support the Stuart claim*

FLORA MACDONALD

It was Flora MacDonald, stepdaughter of a captain in the government army, who famously helped Bonnie Prince Charlie to evade capture following the Jacobite defeat at Culloden. Her cousin asked her to help the prince and they set off in Flora's boat from Culla Bay on the tiny island of Benbecula, to sail "over the sea" to Skye. The prince was disguised as an Irish servant girl, under the name of Betty Burke. Flora later told that it rained heavily on the crossing and the prince sang to her to keep her spirits up. He said farewell to her on Skye and escaped into exile, however Flora was arrested and taken to London where she was imprisoned. She was released in 1747 and became quite a celebrity.

She got married on her return to Scotland and she and her husband entertained Johnson and Boswell when they visited Skye on their famous tour of the Western Isles. Johnson described her as having "soft features, gentle manners and elegant presence." The family emigrated to North Carolina and purchased an estate; it's said that she took with her the sheet in which the prince had lain, declaring that it should serve as her shroud. When the Wars of Independence broke out, she and her husband supported the Hanoverian, George III. They returned to Skye where she died in March 1790. She was apparently wrapped in the shroud and buried in Kilmuir cemetery.

***Above:** Flora McDonald says goodbye to Bonnie Prince Charlie in this painting by George William Joy*

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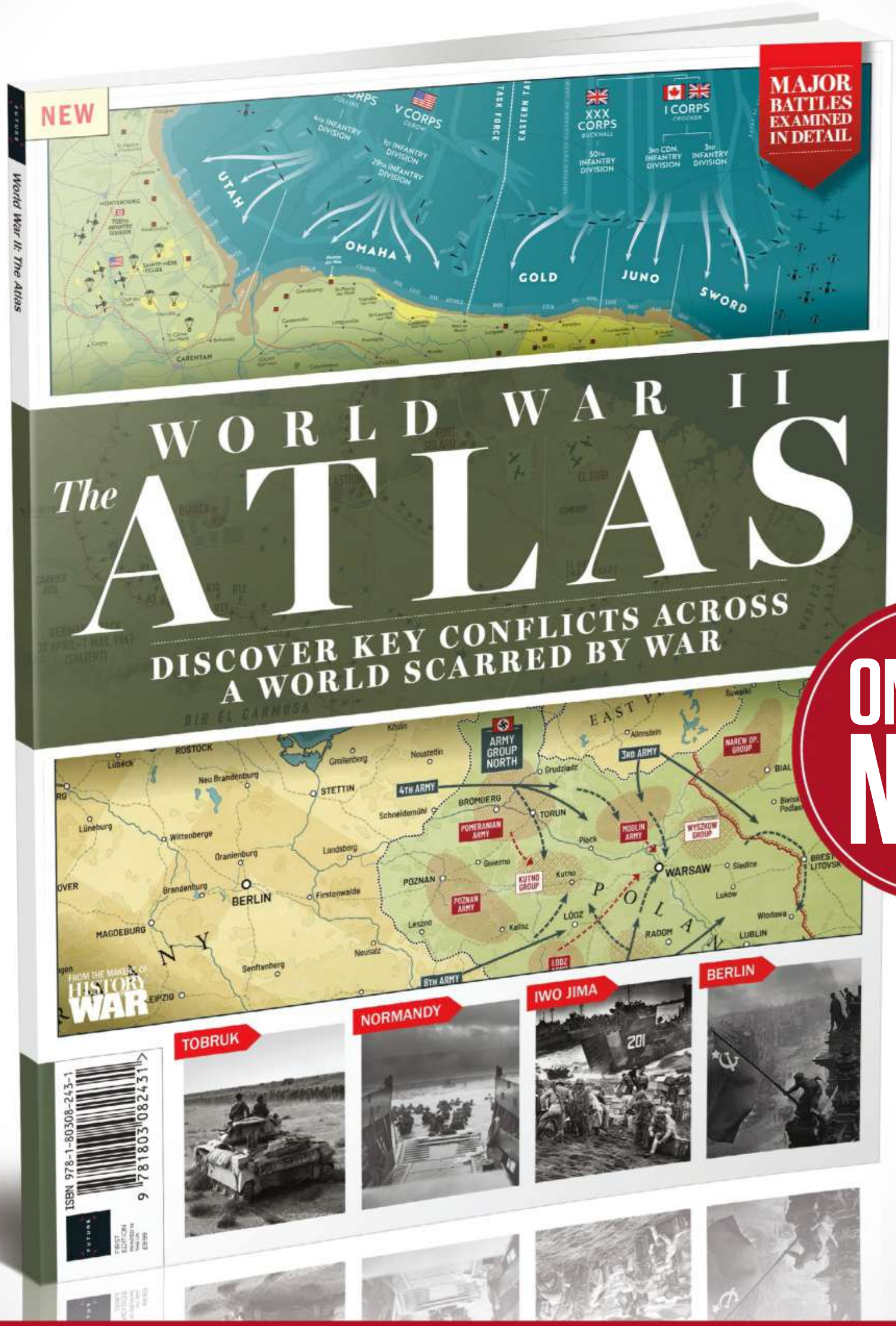

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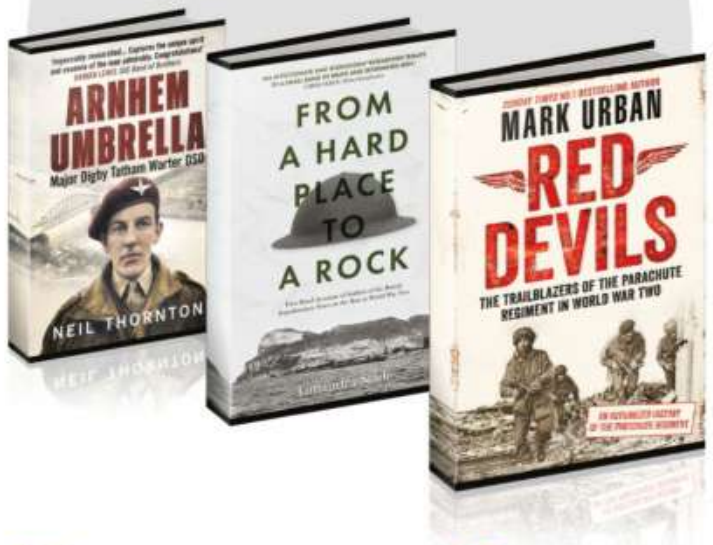
ARNHEM UMBRELLA
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Artefact of War: original Remembrance Poppy

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MUSEUMS & EVENTS

Discover Leicester's remarkable connection to Richard III, Cornwall's regimental museum and the Scottish birthplace of the 'Father of the American Navy'

Looking for Richard

Leicester is the final resting place of King Richard III and the first port of call to discover his legacy

Leicester has fully embraced its connection to one of the most famous kings in history – Richard III of England – since the monarch's remains were discovered there in 2012. His skeleton was sensationally rediscovered within the site of the former Greyfriars Priory in the city centre. Killed in combat at the nearby Battle of Bosworth in 1485 and subsequently transformed into a supervillain in William Shakespeare's play *Richard III*, the king has long fascinated the public imagination.

With DNA from the skeleton confirming it to be the remains of the last Plantagenet king, Richard was reburied in Leicester Cathedral by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 2015. Although its history can be traced to the late 11th century, most of Leicester Cathedral was built in its current form in the Victorian era. Nevertheless, Richard may have recognised parts of the current cathedral that can be traced to its Norman church.

A view of some of the displays at the King Richard III Visitor Centre

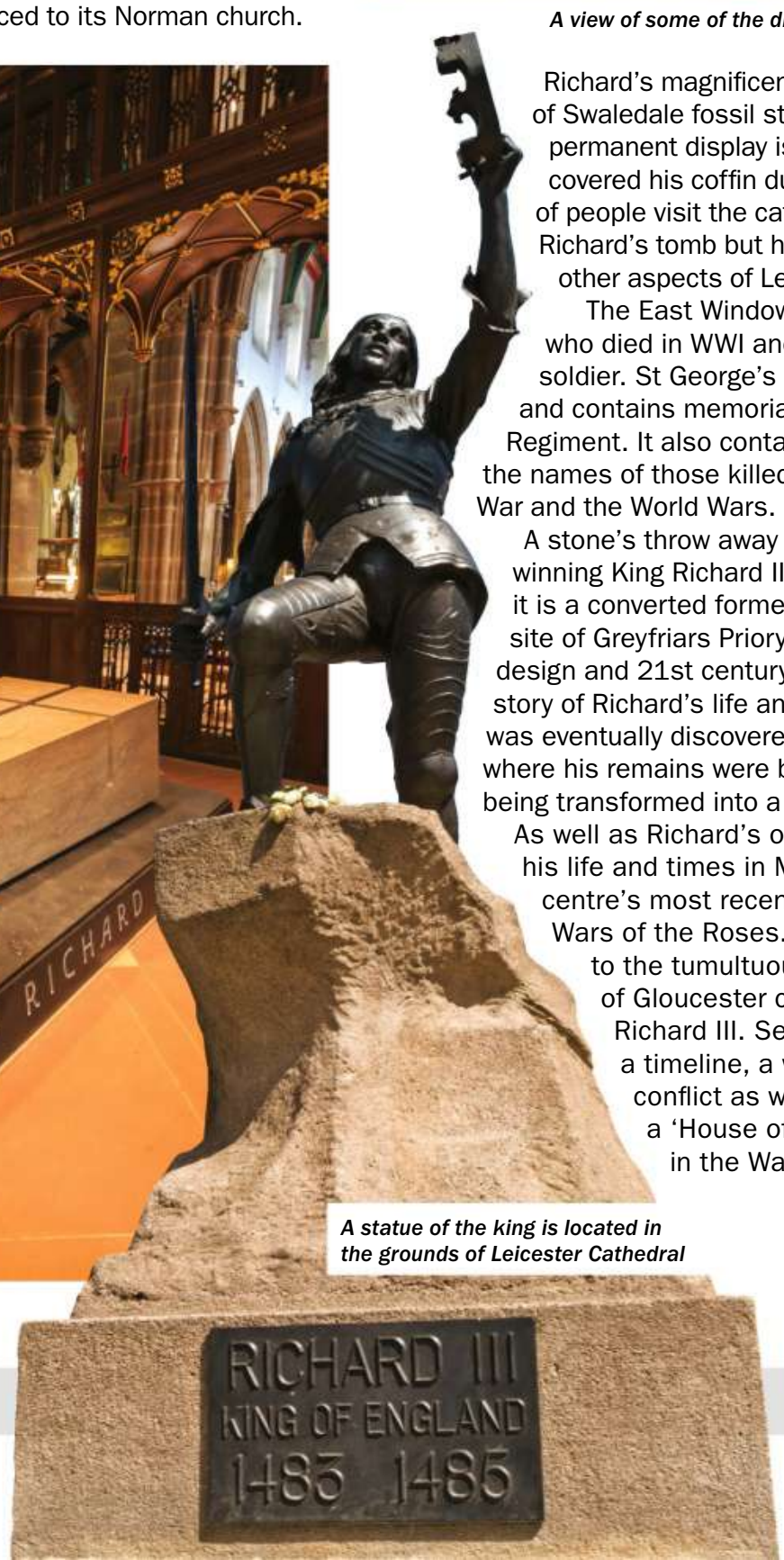
Richard III's tomb is emblazoned with his personal motto "Loyaltyé me lie" ("Loyalty binds me")

Richard's magnificent tomb is cut out of a single piece of Swaledale fossil stone that covers his grave. On permanent display is the 'Pall', a decorative cloth that covered his coffin during his reinternment. Thousand of people visit the cathedral every year to primarily view Richard's tomb but history enthusiasts can discover other aspects of Leicester's military past inside.

The East Window is a monument to the citizens who died in WWI and includes an image of a British soldier. St George's Chapel was reconstructed in 1921 and contains memorials to the Royal Leicestershire Regiment. It also contains regimental battle honours and the names of those killed in the Crimean War, Second Boer War and the World Wars.

A stone's throw away from the cathedral is the award-winning King Richard III Visitor Centre. Opening in 2014, it is a converted former Victorian school located on the site of Greyfriars Priory. Using storytelling, innovative design and 21st century technology, the centre tells the story of Richard's life and death as well as how his body was eventually discovered. Visitors can see the exact place where his remains were buried, with this poignant place being transformed into a glass-floored contemplative space.

As well as Richard's original burial site, visitors uncover his life and times in Murder, Mystery and Mayhem, the centre's most recent exhibition that delves into the Wars of the Roses. It provides a visual introduction to the tumultuous times that surrounded the duke of Gloucester coming to power and becoming Richard III. Sections of the exhibition include a timeline, a wall listing the key battles of the conflict as well as the weaponry used, and a 'House of Cards' display of the key players in the Wars of the Roses.



A statue of the king is located in the grounds of Leicester Cathedral

For more information visit www.leicestercathedral.org and www.kriii.com

Bodmin Keep

Cornwall's regimental museum is housed in a Victorian barracks and contains everything from Victoria Crosses to George Washington's Bible

Located in the Cornish town of the same name, Bodmin Keep is Cornwall's regimental museum. It is housed in Victoria Barracks, a 19th century building that became a recruiting depot for local regiments that were amalgamated in 1881 to form the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry. More than 2,000 soldiers camped and trained at the barracks during WWI and it was occupied by American forces during WWII.

The museum houses more than 300 years of military history, a library, meeting rooms and a collection of 12,000 items. These include George Washington's Bible that was captured in 1777, a Victoria Cross from the Anglo-Somali War and Harry Patch's WWI medals. Known as the 'Last Fighting Tommy', Patch fought with the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry during the Battle of Passchendaele and became the last surviving combat soldier of WWI.

Exhibitions at the museum include Suited and Booted, which explores the patterns and design of British Army uniforms, and 1857 and the Siege of Lucknow, which tells the story of a notorious battle during the Indian Mutiny.

Bodmin Keep is open Monday to Saturday, 10am to 5pm, with last entry at 4pm. School groups are welcome for educational visits and the museum is also a dog-friendly attraction, although it is recommended that dog owners book ahead during busy times.

For more information visit www.bodminkeep.org

A view of the exterior of Bodmin Keep, which is located behind the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry Memorial

Harry Patch (1898 – 2009) never spoke of his WWI experiences until after his 100th birthday, becoming a vocal spokesman for his generation of soldiers

John Paul Jones Cottage

This small house in Scotland was the unlikely birthplace of an American naval hero and is now a museum

John Paul Jones (1747-92) was a Scottish-American sailor and the United States' first famous naval commander, who fought in the Continental Navy during the American Revolutionary War. Known as the 'Father of the American Navy', Jones was an audacious captain who took the war to the British by attacking Britain itself. This included attacking Whitehaven in Cumbria and the Earl of Selkirk's estate on St Mary's Isle, Scotland. He also fought at the Battles of Block Island and Flamborough Head, as well as a naval duel in the Irish-Scottish North Channel.

Despite his allegiance to the United States, Jones was a Scot who was born in Arbigland, Dumfries and Galloway. His birthplace still exists and has been restored to its 18th century appearance as part of the John Paul Jones Cottage Museum. The site was officially opened in 1993 by Vice-Admiral Edward Clexton Jr of the US Navy, who was serving in Britain at the time. The museum features unique artefacts and a visitor centre that has an extensive interpretation of Jones' life. There is an introductory 20-minute video of his life and a Virtual Reality Galleon where you can experience what life was like on an 18th century ship.

***Right:** American and Scottish flags fly outside the birthplace of John Paul Jones*

For more information visit www.johnpauljonesmuseum.com

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REVIEWS

Our pick of the latest military history books and films

MEDIEVAL

A VISUALLY STUNNING PORTRAYAL OF CZECH HERO JAN ZIZKA SEARCHES FOR DEEPER MEANING

Director: Petr Jakl **Starring:** Ben Foster, Michael Caine, Karel Roden, Sophie Lowe **Released:** Out now

Petr Jakl assembles a strong cast and a budget of over US$20 million to direct the most expensive Czech film ever made: a depiction of national hero Jan Zizka. Zizka's military career in 15th century Bohemia was remarkable: the one-eyed commander never lost a battle, and managed to defend Prague with a force of just 80 men against thousands of rampaging crusader knights. But Jakl takes a big risk in stepping away from such episodes to focus on Zizka's early career instead, when he led a small band of mercenaries as rival claimants (Wenceslaus IV King of Bohemia and Sigismund I of Hungary) sought to become Holy Roman Emperor.

In reality, little is known about this period, but the action sequences and location shots are superb. In one battle, there is a clever homage to the innovative tactics Zizka would later make famous in the Hussite Wars. There

"THE ONE-EYED COMMANDER NEVER LOST A BATTLE, AND MANAGED TO DEFEND PRAGUE WITH A FORCE OF JUST 80 MEN AGAINST THOUSANDS OF RAMPAGING CRUSADER KNIGHTS"

is even time for a passionate but somewhat implausible love interest. However, the political machinations that form the story's backdrop are harder to engage with.

We are told Zizka supported Wenceslaus IV in the hope of bringing peace to his war-torn land. A noble motive, but Wenceslaus' historical nickname was 'The Idle', and it is hard to muster much enthusiasm for this apathetic figure who – when faced with the machinations of his opponents – delivers the classic line: "We can always go to Rome next year." By the end of the film Zizka learns to trust his own idealism, but some of the audience may well have stopped caring. **MJ**

ARNHEM UMBRELLA

MAJOR DIGBY TATHAM WARTER DSO

THIS GRIPPING BIOGRAPHY OF THE ECCENTRIC WAR HERO SEPARATES FACT FROM FICTION

Author: Neil Thornton **Publisher:** Fonthill Media **Price:** £30 (Hardback)

Major Digby Tatham Warter. The name conjures up an archetype from a bygone era and that's exactly what this book manages to bring to life from its opening chapter.

Born into an upper-crust family in 1917, Tatham Warter was bred to fight for king and country. Taught to ride and shoot from an early age, he was later educated at Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, via an elite public school, before shipping out to India. By the outbreak of WWII he was enjoying army life in the Raj, playing polo, shooting tigers and 'sticking pigs' – ie hunting wild boar with a spear.

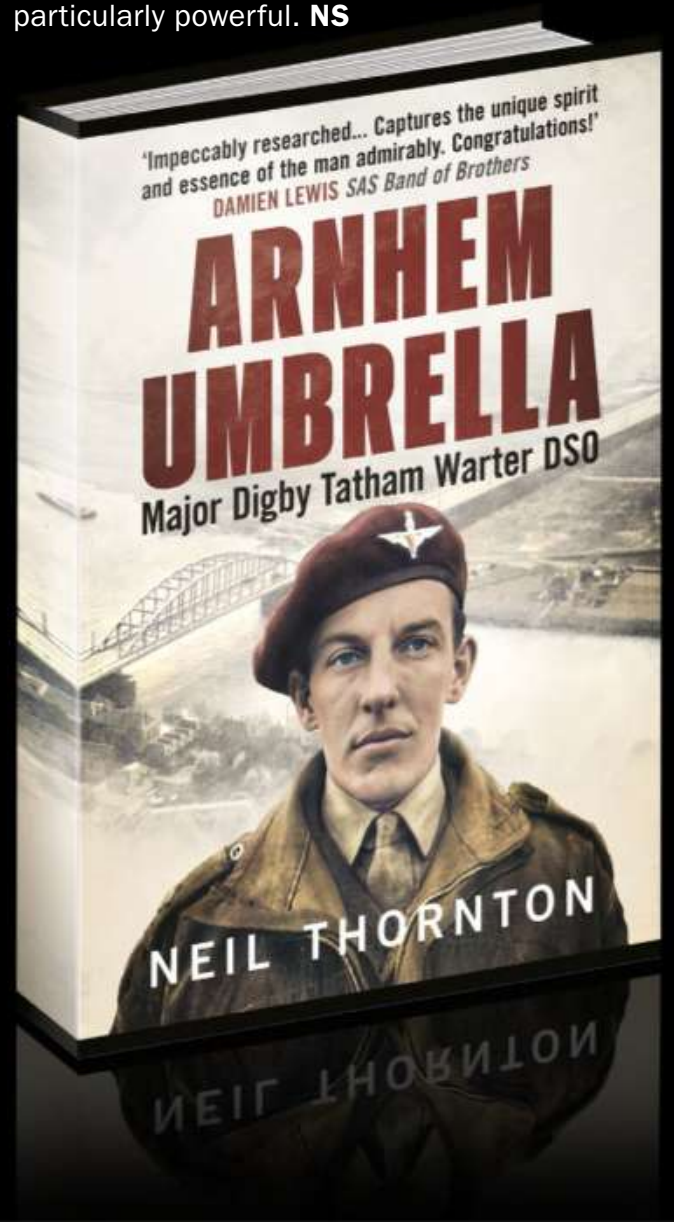
Privileged, thrill-seeking, confident and brave, he in many ways epitomised the officer class of Britain's imperial army. As such, he was desperate to fight and transferred from the infantry to the newly formed Parachute Regiment in 1942 in the hope of speeding things up. Instead, he slowed things down. Back in England, he spent the next two years retraining as a paratroop officer in preparation for D-Day, only to miss the big jump when his division was kept in reserve. Ironically, his original regiment (The Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry) was among the first in.

It would be another three months before Tatham Warter saw combat and although his experience of war would be short-lived, he managed to cram more into a few weeks than many did in years.

Operation Market Garden saw the Allies drop a huge airborne force into Holland to seize three vital bridges. The northernmost of these was at Arnhem, and when Tatham Warter finally leapt into action on 17 September 1944, the company he commanded was the first to reach it. Three days of intense fighting followed during which he carved out a reputation for himself as a first-class combat leader. And, thanks to an umbrella he was seen brandishing during the battle, a place in military folklore.

The umbrella is, of course, from where this book gets its name and there's been a good deal of myth-making around Tatham Warter because of it, along with some of the other 'eccentricities' he displayed during the battle. The book's author, Neil Thornton, has done a superb job of untangling fact from fiction and in doing so reveals a far more compelling truth. Not least Tatham Warter's outrageous post-battle exploits, which have become rather overshadowed by his antics with the aforementioned brolly. Indeed, the middle of the book often reads like a Boys' Own adventure of the kind Tatham Warter doubtless devoured in his youth.

The final part of the book deals largely with his post-war life in Kenya where, in the 1950s, he had a hand in the brutal suppression of the Mau Mau rebellion (he remained a committed imperialist) and later became a safari specialist. Interestingly, he was among the first to advocate shooting the local wildlife with cameras rather than guns. Packed with photos, first-hand accounts and cameos from notable historical figures, this is a well-researched book in which Tatham Warter makes for a frequently enigmatic, if anachronistic, protagonist. Its account of the Paras' doomed mission to Arnhem is particularly powerful. **NS**


'Impeccably researched... Captures the unique spirit and essence of the man admirably. Congratulations!'
DAMIEN LEWIS SAS Band of Brothers
ARNHEM UMBRELLA
Major Digby Tatham Warter DSO
NEIL THORNTON

FROM A HARD PLACE TO A ROCK

GRIPPING FIRST-HAND ACCOUNTS OF FOUR OFFICERS OF THE BRITISH EXPEDITIONARY FORCE WHO ESCAPED FROM THE ENEMY'S CLUTCHES AND WENT ON THE RUN ACROSS FRANCE AND SPAIN

Author: Timandra Slade **Publisher:** Troubador **Price:** £18.99 (Hardback)

Timandra Slade tells the story of the extraordinary escape from enemy captivity in Occupied France by four officers of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) during World War II. These men were tasked to harass or slow down the advancing enemy to allow the main BEF body to get safely off the beaches of Dunkirk or the Port of Le Havre. Once their mission was accomplished, the strategy was for the foursome to then make their getaway to safe quarters.

It did not go according to plan: the four were captured, but each took the decision to escape at the earliest possible moment. One was the author's father, Chris Waters, a lieutenant in the Royal Engineers. Slade recounts in detail the adventures of these prisoners on the run. Waters, along with Second Lieutenant Dennis Lennon, broke away from a column of prisoners in France, disguised as civilians. They were undaunted by the prospect of spending weeks, if not months, to reach unoccupied France and eventually made the Pyrenean crossing into Spain and safety.

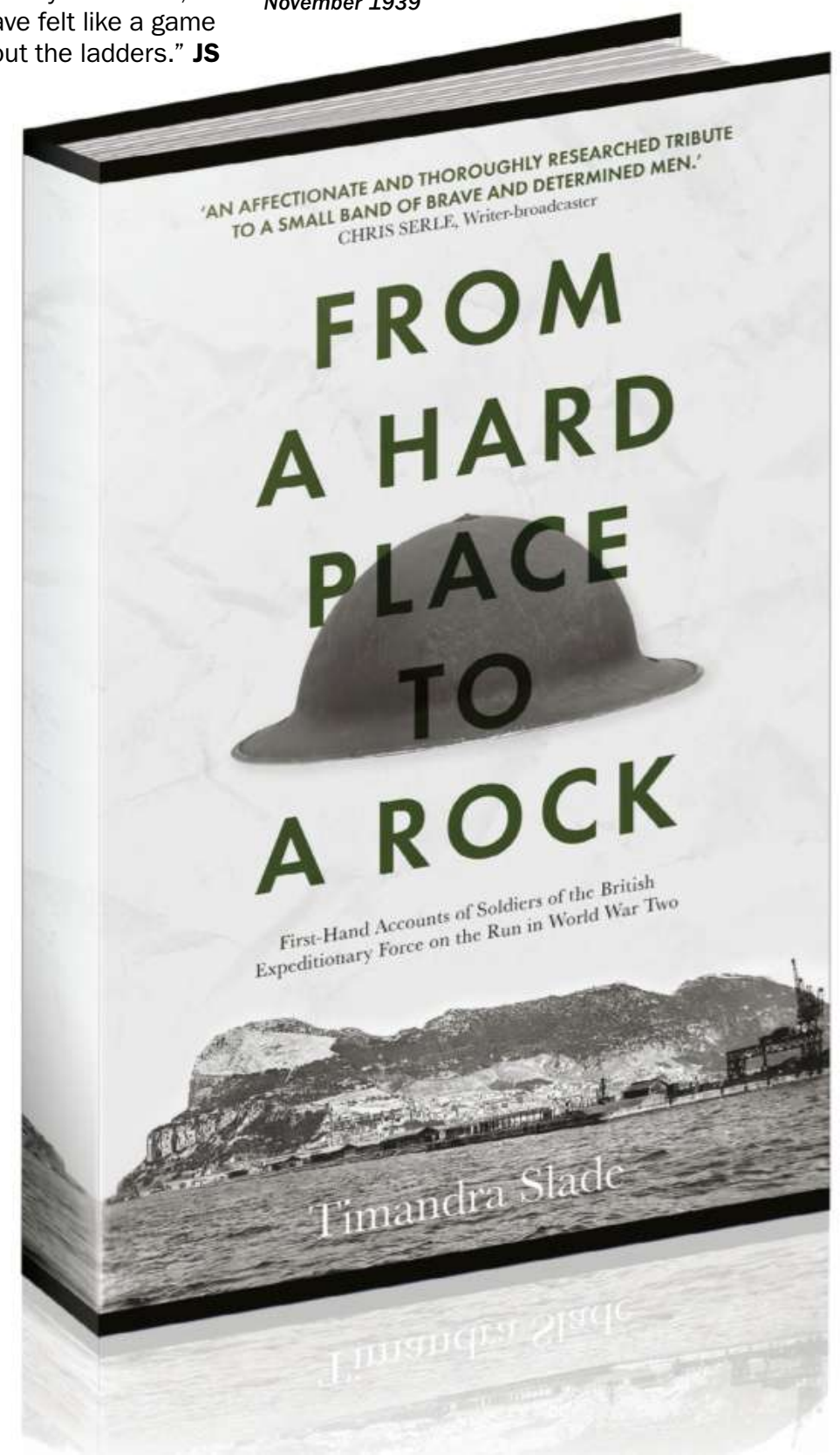
The breakout of Captains Jimmy Johnson and Harold 'Tommy' Trythall, both wounded in the fighting, was encouraged by the unpleasant prospect of being sent to Germany. Despite their injuries, the pair contrived to cut a hole through the prison camp's perimeter fence and flee on foot and by bicycle more than 1100km to Spain.

Slade draws on first-hand accounts from journals and letters by the protagonists themselves, detailing their plans and risky ventures en route to safe territory. "At times," notes the author, "it must have felt like a game of snakes and ladders, without the ladders." **JS**

"DESPITE THEIR INJURIES, THE PAIR CONTRIVED TO CUT A HOLE THROUGH THE CAMP PERIMETER FENCE AND FLEE ON FOOT AND BY BICYCLE MORE THAN 1100KM TO SPAIN"

Below left, top: *British troops march into fortifications at the Maginot Line, in the early months of WWII*

Below left, bottom: *Men of the 1st Battalion Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders digging trenches at Aix, France, November 1939*


'AN AFFECTIONATE AND THOROUGHLY RESEARCHED TRIBUTE TO A SMALL BAND OF BRAVE AND DETERMINED MEN.'
CHRIS SERLE, Writer-broadcaster
FROM A HARD PLACE TO A ROCK
First-Hand Accounts of Soldiers of the British Expeditionary Force on the Run in World War Two
Timandra Slade

Images © Getty

The men of the Parachute Regiment were feared by the enemy during WWII

RED DEVILS

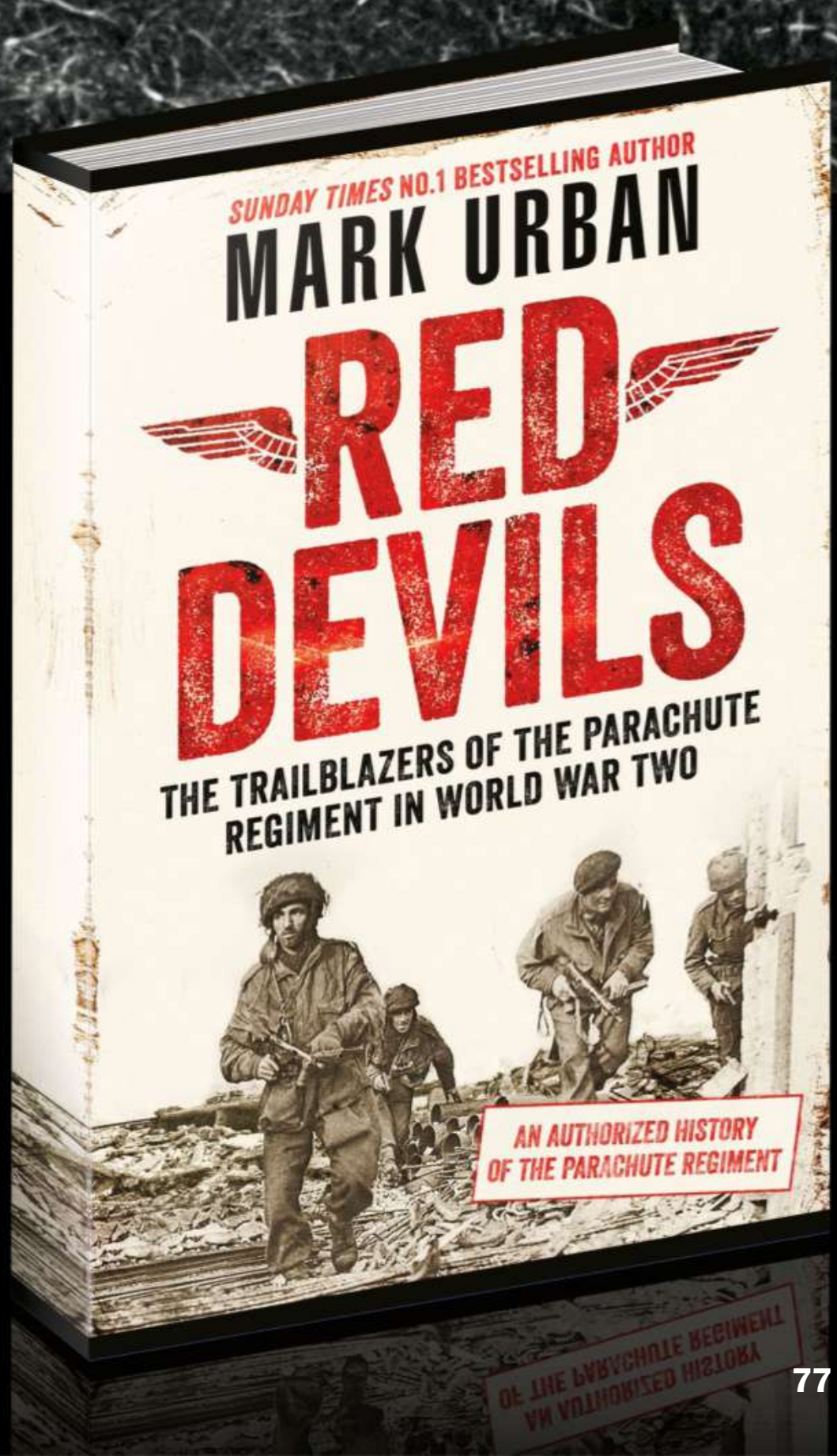
LEARN ABOUT THE CREATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ELITE BRITISH UNIT THAT FORGED THE PATH FOR AIRBORNE FORCES TO FOLLOW IN WWII

Author: Mark Urban **Publisher:** Viking **Price:** £25.99

Mark Urban's meticulously researched account of the formation of one of the first airborne units, the 2nd Battalion, provides the main focus for weaving together a series of personal tales. The narrative links the stories of men who served in this unit, allowing the reader to follow the trajectory of those who were carried to different places by the tides of war. The wartime founders were volunteers from a highly diverse range of professional backgrounds and beliefs, from circus performers to solicitors, policemen and grave-diggers, from Christians and Jews to communists.

The author follows the exploits of a handful of these trailblazers of the Parachute Regiment who shed blood for their country, of whom two would not survive the conflict. Their individual fates span the gamut of the regiment's wider role in the conflict, of hard fighting, wounding, capture, death and decoration.

The parachutists exposed themselves to enemy fire even before touching down on firm ground. They were dropped into battle carrying rifles and Bren guns attached to them and the enemy gave no quarter in shooting down these fierce attackers. War correspondent Alan Moorhead noted how these young men were feared by the Italians and Germans as the most ferocious of fighters: "They were grown old to war in a few weeks and all the normal uses of peace and the ambitions of peace were entirely drained out of them." Meanwhile General Harold Alexander stated in a letter in 1943: "They have proved their mastery over the enemy, who have a wholesome respect for this famous brigade… the Red Devils." **JS**


SUNDAY TIMES NO.1 BESTSELLING AUTHOR
MARK URBAN
RED DEVILS
THE TRAILBLAZERS OF THE PARACHUTE REGIMENT IN WORLD WAR TWO
AN AUTHORIZED HISTORY OF THE PARACHUTE REGIMENT

WWII THIS MONTH...

NOVEMBER 1942

To commemorate 80 years since the Second World War, **History of War** will be taking a look at some of the key events taking place during each month of the conflict

American troops land at Arezeu near Oran, Algeria

Greek partisans chat during a lull in fighting Axis forces, c.1942

BATTLE OF GORGOPOTAMOS

Codenamed Operation Harling, Gorgopotamos was a British Special Forces mission in occupied Greece in conjunction with Greek resistance groups. Masterminded by the Special Operations Executive, Harling aimed to destroy the strategically important Gorgopotamos railway viaduct that connected Athens to Thessaloniki.

Commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Eddie Myers, the British teamed up with Greek partisans from the EDES and ELAS resistance groups. On 25 November 1942, the British-Greek force of 150 fighters attacked the viaduct, which was mostly garrisoned by Italian troops. The partisans fought the soldiers while the British demolition team planted explosives and blew up the bridge. Gorgopotamos was one of the first major sabotage operations in occupied Europe.

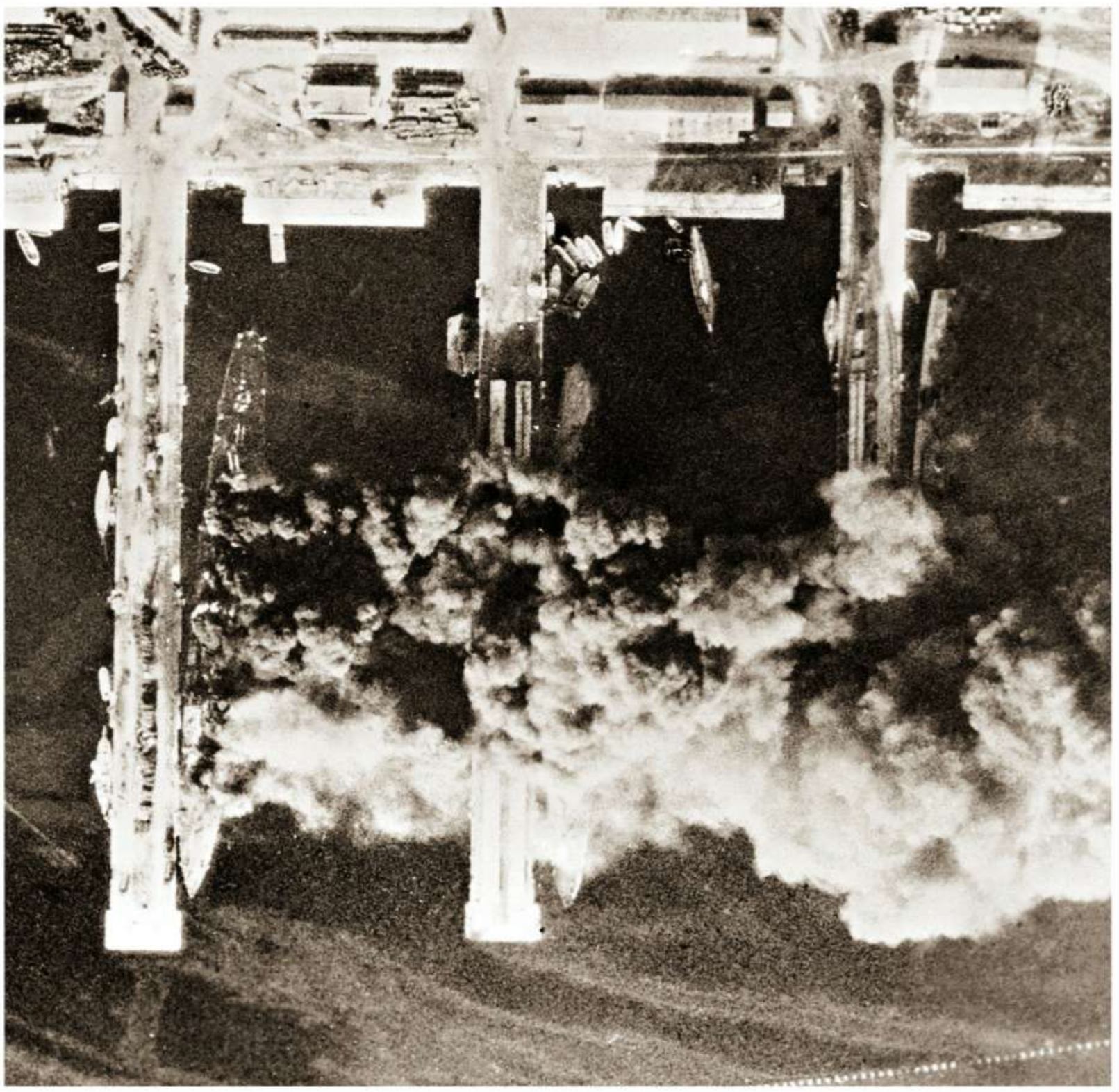
Images © Alamy

OPERATION TORCH

Conducted during 8-16 November 1942, Operation Torch was the Allied invasion of French North Africa. Under the control of Vichy French and with German and Italian support, France's nominally pro-Axis colonies were seen as a potential region to recapture for the Allies.

Allied task forces made a three-pronged attack at Casablanca, Oran and Algiers. American, British, Indian and Free French armies landed soldiers while Canadian, Dutch and Australian forces provided additional naval support. Dwight D Eisenhower was in command of the operation, with Torch being the first time that the Americans conducted a major airborne assault.

Despite unexpected resistance in some areas, Torch was a success and led to the Anglo-American occupation of Morocco and Algeria. The Free French regained control of French West Africa, while their Vichy counterparts began cooperating with the Allies.



The Vichy French scuttled three battleships, seven cruisers, 28 destroyers and 20 submarines

CASE ANTON

Following the Allied success of Operation Torch, Adolf Hitler ordered that Vichy France be fully occupied by Axis forces. Until November 1942, the Vichy government had been nominally independent, although it was really a puppet state of the occupying Nazis.

Corsica was occupied first on 11 November, with the Vichy French mainland being invaded the following day. This operation was known as Case Anton and aimed to divide Vichy France between Germany and Italy. Soldiers from both countries participated, with the Germans planning to capture the Vichy French fleet at Toulon. The French naval commanders were able to delay the Germans for over a fortnight before they dramatically scuttled their ships and submarines on 27 November 1942.

Red Army soldiers fight through the rubble of Stalingrad, November 1942

OPERATION URANUS

Conducted during 19-23 November 1942, Operation Uranus saw the Red Army encircle Axis forces near Stalingrad. Largely commanded by General Georgy Zhukov, the Soviets committed almost 1.5 million troops against 400,000 German, 143,000-200,000 Romanian and an unknown number of Italians five months into the Battle of Stalingrad. Their aim was to destroy Axis forces in and around the city in conjunction with Operation Mars in the Caucasus.

The Romanians lacked heavy equipment while the Germans had limited numbers of tanks. Despite initially successful Romanian resistance, the Soviets forced a retreat by 20 November while bypassing German infantry divisions. Two days later, 290,000 Axis soldiers were encircled east of the River Don. Uranus was a turning point for the Soviets but the battle for Stalingrad continued until February 1943.

RELEASE OF CASABLANCA

Released on 26 November 1942, *Casablanca* became one of the most famous films of all time. Starring Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman in iconic roles, the film was not only filmed but also set during WWII. It tells the story of an American expatriate (Bogart) who must choose between his love for a Norwegian woman (Bergman) or assisting both her and her Czech Resistance husband escape from Vichy-controlled Casablanca.

The film mirrored real events at the time of its release with the collapse of Vichy French North Africa following Operation Torch. Although its box office results were not spectacular it won three Academy Awards, including Best Picture, in 1943. In 1989 the US National Film Registry selected *Casablanca* for preservation for being "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant".

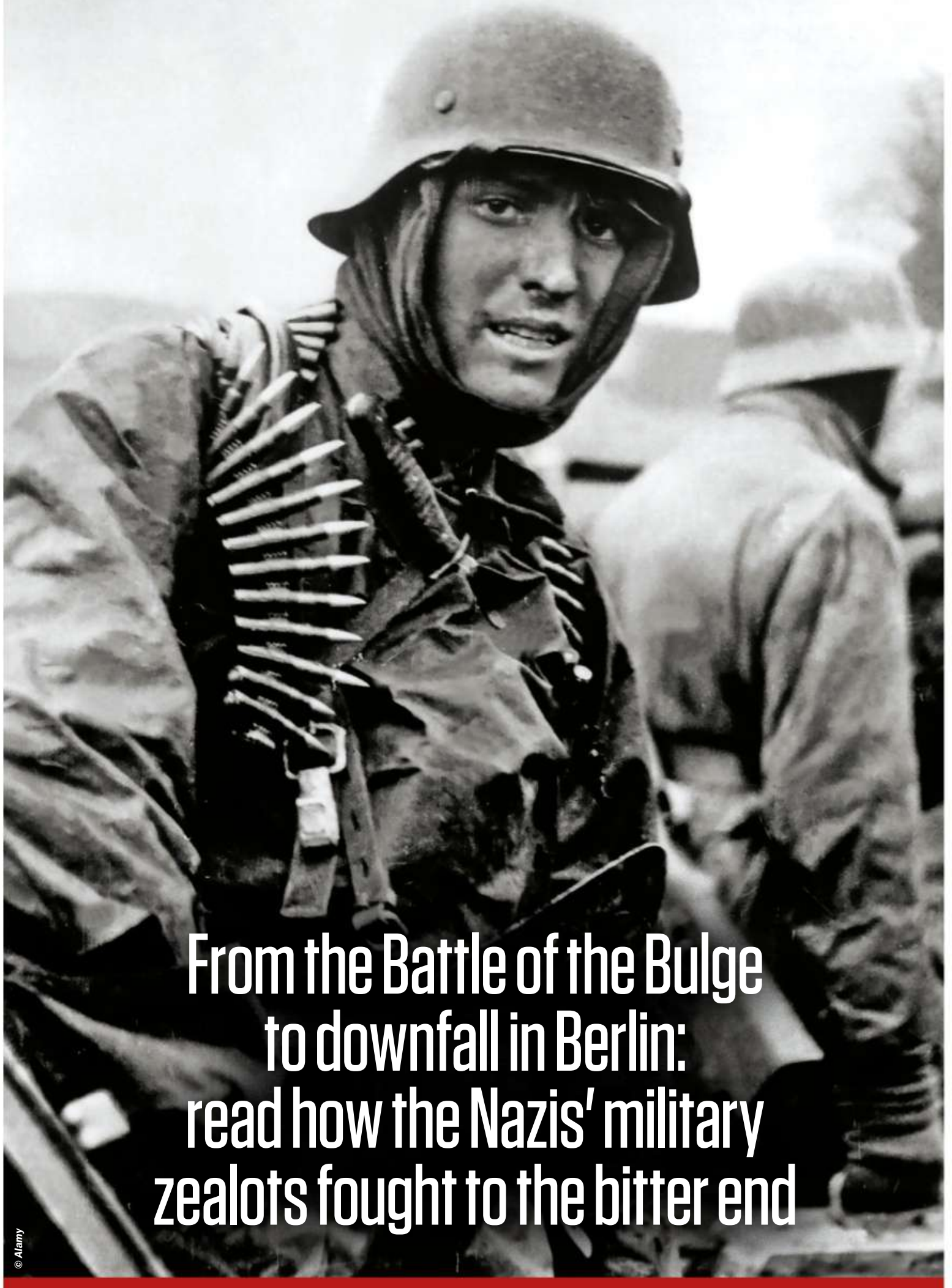
"ALTHOUGH ITS BOX OFFICE RESULTS WERE NOT SPECTACULAR IT WON THREE ACADEMY AWARDS, INCLUDING BEST PICTURE"

Casablanca is famous for lines such as "Here's looking at you, Kid", "We'll always have Paris" and "Round up the usual suspects"

Images © Alamy

NEXT MONTH

LAST STAND OF THE WAFFEN SS



From the Battle of the Bulge to downfall in Berlin: read how the Nazis' military zealots fought to the bitter end

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ORIGINAL

REMEMBRANCE POPPY

This fabric poppy was made for the first batch of the Royal British Legion's remembrance symbols in 1921

An artificial flower worn by some countries to commemorate military personnel who have died in war, remembrance poppies have been sold for over 100 years. They have their origins in WWI when two women, Moina Michael and Anna Guérin, were inspired by the emphasis on poppies in Canadian soldier John McCrae's famous poem *In Flanders Fields*.

Michael, an American academic, vowed she would always wear the poppy as a symbol of remembrance. She persuaded the American Legion Auxiliary to adopt it as its symbol in 1921. Meanwhile Guérin – a French lecturer and fundraiser – had begun holding 'Poppy Days' in the USA in 1919 by selling paper poppies in exchange for war-related charity donations.

It was Guérin who fuelled the campaign for the poppy to be a remembrance symbol for what was then known as Armistice Memorial Day (11 November). Her message particularly gained traction in Britain and its empire where she worked with Field Marshal Earl Haig, who was the president of the fledgling Royal British Legion.

On 6 October 1921, Haig announced that he wanted 11 November 1921 to be known as Remembrance Day and that it would be a 'Poppy Day'. The poppies were now made of bright red pieces of fabric with a green stalk and little banner that said British Legion Remembrance Day. This pictured example was one of nine million poppies that were manufactured in France under Guérin's supervision. These poppies soon sold out, with people improvising with other flowers. Despite her role in establishing the poppy in British remembrance culture, Guérin received little media recognition at the time and was forgotten by history.

The 1921 poppies were made by French widows and orphans in devastated areas of France

"HAIG ANNOUNCED THAT HE WANTED 11 NOVEMBER 1921 TO BE KNOWN AS REMEMBRANCE DAY AND THAT IT WOULD BE A 'POPPY DAY'"

ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

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www.britishlegion.org.uk

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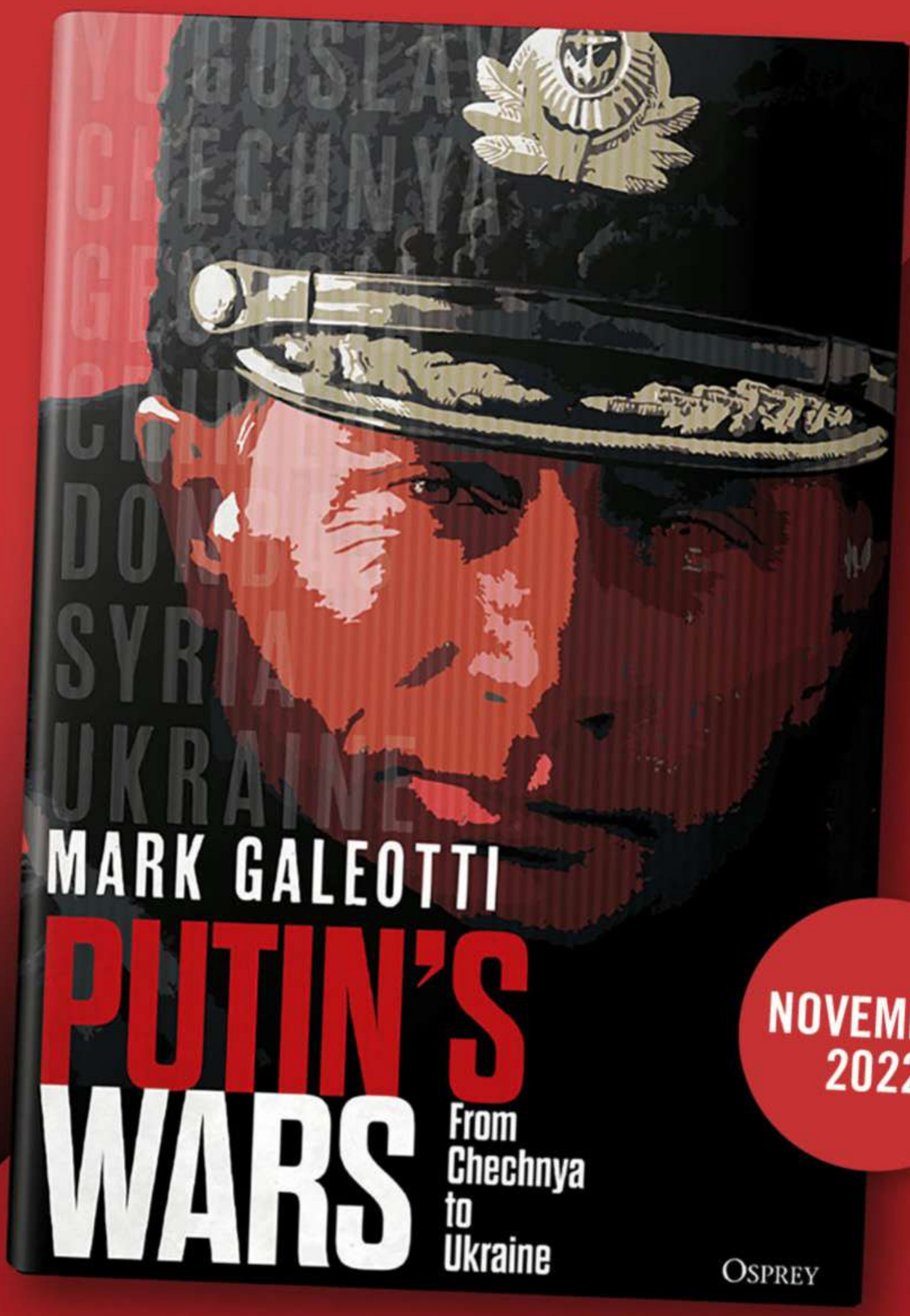

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